

The Unsung Losers by Xchloexpeepsx

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Genre: F/M, It's a fix it in regards to the losers club, M/M, Story focuses on Original characters, With appearances from the losers

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Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Halon, Original Characters, Pennywise the Clown - Character, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

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Summary:

The Losers Club were not the only ones to suffer the terrifying clutches of Pennywise the Clown. Story follows four others during the summer of 1989 who all suffered terrifying experiences. 27 years later they feel this weird strong urge to go and visit Derry, little do they know they will be fighting to conquer their fears.

1. Chapter One - Bella

Summary for the Chapter:

Following Bella's Summer and the first of the four to leave Derry.

Here she was quietly walking home with Eddie Kaspbrak as he walked alongside her holding onto his bike, the silence between them was incredibly awkward. They were neighbours and her mom always insisted that she should hang out with Eddie more. If she was honest she thinks her mom was trying to get her a little boyfriend and Eddie seemed the right pick especially because of what happened all those years ago.

She still remembers it very clearly and how terrified she felt. She was at the backstage of the school stage, getting ready to go on, it was the school play and her mom had come to see her, her dad was stuck in work but he had wished her the best of luck promising that she is going to be amazing. She wasn't the lead part of the play, no that was given to Beverly Marsh but she had gotten a pretty good part and it seemed like Greta Bowie was not happy about it. She noticed the death stares Greta gave her while she patiently waited to go on, it made her feel anxious but she earned this part, she had every right to be excited and confident.

When she had gone on stage she was all confident and smiles especially when she saw her mom in the front row next to Eddie's mom. This was her moment to shine and she did. As her part was done and she left the stage she was all smiles and a sense of pride in herself, that's when the uncomfortable feeling of Greta's death stare stabbed away at all of her confidence. Her smile dropped and she went somewhere else away from her while she waited for the play to finish.

She sat down on a chair while she watched some of the boys get ready to go on stage. Seemed Richie Tozier was playing with Eddie's props while an angry Eddie was trying to get them off him, it was pretty funny to watch. Her legs swung on the chair as she watched the teacher go over and take it off Richie and give it back, watching

as Eddie stuck his tongue out at him causing her to giggle. “Bella sweetie? Could you put these away in the closet for me?” Her teacher had asked her as she now held various props in her hands. She was always happy to help her teacher, Bella smiled, jumping off her chair as she took the props from her teacher’s hands and made her way to the small walk in closet.

The props needed to go right to the back of the closet, walking right into it as she put the props away in the boxes a sudden darkness took over and the sound of the click of the lock. Panic began to wash over her as she made her way to the door. “Hello?” She called out as she tried to open the door, it was locked.

She could hear the sound of giggles before a rush of footsteps began to grow quiet. She’s locked in, she’s locked in! Bella began to bang on the door, stopping to look through the key hole, no one was around, they’re all hanging out by the stage.

“I’m locked in! Someone help!” She called out, banging on the door.

She began to panic it felt like the walls of the closet were beginning to close in on her and she couldn’t breathe. Her throat grew weak whether it was because she could feel herself beginning to cry or because she felt like she couldn’t breathe she didn’t know. What if they never find her? What if she’s locked here forever? Bella yelled out, frantically banging on the door and sobbing in a panicked state.

She begged outloud hoping that someone would walk past and let her out. She continued to bang on the door until she heard another voice “hello?” He called out, by the sounds of the voice it was Eddie Kaspbrak.

“Hello?! I can’t get out!” She sobbed as she heard the sound of footsteps making their way closer to the door and the sound of the lock being pulled.

Poor little Eddie got the fight of his life the moment he opened the closet as Bella Morgan threw herself into his arms and began to sob, clutching hard onto him. His hand awkwardly reaching up to pat her back in an attempt to comfort her. Everyone started to come over as they heard the commotion going on.

“Bella sweetie what’s happened?” Asked her class teacher as she rushed over to them both.

“She was locked in Miss” Responded Eddie.

The play continued on and Bella spent the rest of it sitting on a chair next to Eddie who had offered to stay with her. It was silent between the two apart from the sound of her sniffles and hiccups as she began to calm down.

When both Bella and Eddie’s moms found out what had happened, since then they were set up on awkward “play dates” which usually consisted of them awkwardly sitting in silence, her wearing some stupid dress her mom brought her and awkward smiles at each other.

“You should play with Eddie more, he’s such a sweet boy” her mom would say to her, sure he’s really sweet and has a cute smile but her mom was really not helping. Now it’s become a thing where Eddie’s mom would tell him that Bella is walking home with him after school since they’re neighbours. The walks home were usually a little awkward, saying a few little things here and there before it becomes a silence again. Bella can’t lie, she does have a little crush on Eddie.

But Bella had also noticed how Richie always had this almost annoyed look on his face whenever she came over to Eddie, she couldn’t understand why because she had never really even spoken to him. When she’s partnered up with Richie in class he was always fine with her but it’s a different story whenever she’s near Eddie. Did he know that she liked him? Did he think she was going to get in the middle of their friendship?

They gave each other quiet goodbyes before splitting off to go into their homes. She entered the house saying a quick I’m home to her mom before going up the stairs to her bedroom. It was the day before the last day of school and she’d be finished for the summer, in a way she was relieved, this year had been too stressful for a thirteen year old.

She hung her bag up on her door before she fell back onto her bed. Closing her eyes for a little bit before the sound of the static on her walkie talkie started to go off. “Bells! Come in Bells! You there?” It was her other neighbour Marcus, also only friend in school.

She opened her eyes again, reaching forward for the walkie talkie

"Bells here you there mucus?" She asked.

"Why is my code name Mucus again?"

"The only thing I could think of similar to Marcus"

"I could have just been codenamed Mark" he exclaimed

"Mark is boring" she smirked.

"Anyway! You up for going to the movie theatre tonight?" Asked Marcus.

"We have school tomorrow"

"So?! It will be the last day before summer! We should go! Unless you're scared that is?" Teased Marcus, she could hear his smirk.

She thought about it, one late school night wouldn't be too bad, she doubts many people will be in school tomorrow due to it being the last day before summer anyway.

"Of course I'm not scared! Okay I'll be there" she sighed.

"Awesome! Hit my window when you're ready Bells!" He said before he was gone.

Bella sighed, putting the walkie talkie to the side before getting up to find something new to wear. She went with a simple pink dress with a denim jacket to go over. She quickly grabbed her bag before rushing down stairs calling out that she's going to the movies with Marcus before she left the house.

Making her way over to Marcus' house she picked up a rock she found on the ground before throwing it at his window a loud clang as it did. She watched as Marcus opened his window, a smile on his face as he looked down at her "I'm impressed! I'll just be a second" he said as he complimented her rock throwing skills before he disappeared and the window was shut again.

She walked over to sit on his front porch as she sat and waited for her friend to come down. Elbows on her knees as she rested her head in her hands as she waited, He seems to take an awfully long time to get ready for a boy.

She finally heard the sound of the front door being opened as Marcus finally arrived. "You took your time" she said as she turned to look at him "curl your hair?" She asked as she stood up with a smirk on his face.

"Oh shut up Bells" he scoffed as he playfully shoved her.

For a walk that is usually long to the Derry movie theatre it felt awfully quick, probably because with Marcus she can laugh and joke with him and time flies by. It's usually awkward and quiet with Eddie and she's always fixated on his sweet brown eyes that make her heart do little flips, after what happened with the whole closest thing she's always felt like Eddie was her little knight in shining armour. Marcus is just her friend, her mom has questioned before if something was going on because it was rare for girls to just hang out with boys in Derry but he was just a friend, the one to always make her laugh and smile when she was down.

They arrived at the movie theatre and payed for their tickets, tonight some sort of warewolf movie was showing and it seems a lot of kids from school had come here tonight. Bella brought the candy and Marcus brought the root beers and popcorn, that's always how it went down.

He came rushing over to her with smiles and his hands incredibly full as Bella took her stuff, offering a sweet thanks as they made their way in to find a seat. It was busy in the movie theatre tonight as the seats began to fill up both finding seats at the back before Marcus put his feet up.

Bella slapped his arm as she told him it's rude to put his feet up "okay mom" he muttered as he rubbed his arm. Bella watched as all the people arrived all in groups as they found places to sit, She noticed Eddie walk in with his other friends, Richie, Stan and Bill. He gave her a small smile and a wave and Bella gave a little wave back. "You're so obvious" Muttered Marcus through the popcorn currently in his mouth.

"What?"

"You obviously have a thing for Eddie" he responded causing Bella to fling back in her chair and roll her eyes.

As she continued to watch people come in that's when she noticed one boy, anxiously pulling on his jacket sleeves as he looked around for a place to sit. He looked pretty familiar, he looked her age so maybe he was in her classes.

"Poor kid" said Marcus

"Who is he?" She asked as she turned to face her friend

"That's Ethan Davis...he doesn't have any friends but I think it's because he's quiet, he's in my math class...just keeps to himself but it seems he's been a target by the Bowers gang" he explained.

"Who hasn't?" She responded, she's pretty sure Patrick the fucking creep had wolf whistled at her once.

She felt bad for this Ethan kid as she watched him looking to try to find a seat but others clearly didn't want to know.

"You think we should invite him to sit with us?" She asked as Marcus shrugged his shoulders in response

"Sure"

"Ethan!" She called out causing the boy to jump a little and look up at her, furrowing his eyebrows and pointing at himself.

"Yeah!" She said as she waved her hand as an indication for him to come over. He nervously pulled on his sleeves as he made his way up the steps towards her and Marcus.

As Ethan came closer she was able to get a better look at him he was about her height maybe slightly taller, brown hair that looked a little fluffed and soft brown eyes just like Eddie.

He had a nervous smile as he stood in front of her "You alone?" She asked.

Ethan swallowed before pulling on his sleeves "um...yeah but it's fine!" He nervously said before Bella quickly responded back.

"Do you want to sit with us?" She asked causing Ethan's eyes to almost light up, Bella thought it was cute.

"Y-you sure? I mean I-" he started stuttering a little before Bella smiled back at him.

"Yeah I'm sure" she said with a soft smile.

"Take a seat bud" joined in Marcus before Ethan smiled back, slowly sitting down in the chair next to her.

It went silent in the room as the lights went out, reaching out she held Marcus' hand tightly as his breath hitched, Marcus is scared of the dark and Bella was aware, she always held his hand to reassure him that she was there but the fear usually goes away once the screen turns on, giving light to the room.

The movie went on for a while, all looking incredibly ridiculous and fake and Bella grew bored. That's when she noticed something,

something red in the corner of her eye. As she looked there it was a red balloon, floating in the room, was no one else noticing this? She felt this urge to go after it, like the balloon was drawing her towards it.

She excused herself, telling the boys that she needed the bathroom as she shuffled past Ethan before she went to follow the balloon. She walked down the steps, quickly moving out the way of people in front before leaving the room. There was the balloon again slowly going down a corridor in the movie theatre. She felt like she had no control of her feet as she followed the balloon down the corridor getting closer and closer to another door.

Slowly opening the door leading to another corridor she continued walking and walking, following the balloon until she got to the back of the room. As she grabbed the balloon she felt the presence of someone there, as she slowly looked forward she noticed something hidden in the darkness. Her eyes narrowed as she tried to get a better look, that's when she noticed the figure of someone, face slowly emerging out of the darkness....a clown.

"Bella isn't it?" The clown said with a toothy smile. Bella nodded her head but something felt wrong, really wrong.

"You lost Bella?" It said next but something about the question sent shivers down her spine.

She nervously swallowed before speaking up "I should go" she muttered as she stepped back, letting go of the balloon.

"What's the rush Bella?" The clown said, the nickname rolling off its tongue causing Bella's heart to begin to pound. This was wrong, she was abandoned in the theatre, away from everyone else, children had been reported missing all year, none of them found, she needed to run.

She turned around and began to run but it felt like the corridor was getting longer and longer. She picked up the pace and suddenly it felt like the corridor was getting smaller and smaller. She felt like she couldn't breathe, she was getting flashbacks to all those years with the closet, the fear she felt that day. The walls felt like they were getting smaller and smaller as she continued to run. It felt like a nightmare only this time it was real. She could hear the clown

laughing in her ears and she began to scream as she continued to run, screaming until her throat hurt. She needed out, the walls were closing in on her.

She tripped over her feet, falling to the floor before she slowly curled up in a ball. The walls still feeling like they're closing in on her as she began to sob and scream, the laughter of the clown still in her ears. This was it, whatever it was she was going to die, she was either going to suffocate or get crushed to death.

She screamed and sobbed and the next minute there was a brightness and the force of someone grabbing her arm and forcefully pulling her out. The clown? She began to scream about to kick the clown away "Bella! Bella it's okay!" A boy's voice said, suddenly she felt two hands at her cheeks, forcing her to look up at the source of the voice and that's when she was met with a pair brown eyes. It was Ethan, he had a look of worry and concern on his face as he held hers.

"Hey you're okay, I promise you you're okay" he said softly as Bella's breathing began to calm down and the sobs began, she was shaking but Ethan pulled her closer into a hug. Her hand clutched his jacket as she buried her face into his shirt, she could sense Marcus was standing there too unsure of what to do because his best friend was crying and clearly terrified. Most likely people will be coming out to see what the commotion was but she didn't care, she nearly died back there and Ethan came to her rescue.

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She didn't talk about that happened when she came into school the next day and Marcus didn't ask, he probably thought it was best not to and she didn't blame him. She didn't see Ethan the next day but she wanted to thank him for looking out for her, she had never even noticed or spoken to him before but there he was as her knight in shining armour saving her.

They walked outside during lunch and went to sit under a tree. It had been a little quiet between the two after what had happened the day before, she wasn't sure if they had taken someone's seat because there was a small red book on the floor. She turned to look at Marcus who raised an eyebrow at her.

"We can't look it's rude!" She said

"They won't know!" He responded as he reached forward to snatch the book from her hands.

She shook her head as she turned away, she's not going to invade someone's privacy like that, Marcus may be able to live with that guilt but she couldn't.

"Man some asshole really did a number on this guys drawings, scribbled black shit all over them....Bells?" his tone of voice suddenly changing.

"You need to look at this" he said as Bella curiously turned her head, god she feels so bad for looking at someone else's stuff. Her heartbeat picked up once she sees what's on the page, it was a drawing....of her?

Under the scribbles she could see the different shades of brown in her hair, her smile and the freckles across her nose, the drawing looked incredibly realistic and soft looking. It was making her heart race, someone had took the time to draw her and she didn't even know who, it can't be Eddie as much as she'd want it to be, she's never seen that boy draw, Bill Denbrough draws that she knows but she's sure she's seen him with a black book instead of a red one.

"Is that me?" She said

"Either that or a strong look alike, Bella Morgan has a secret admirer" he smirked as he put the book down and Bella felt a smile forming on her own face.

She felt guilty for being just as bad as Marcus and sneaking at this persons notepad but someone had took the time to draw her, some asshole had scribbled all over it but it didn't change that fact that someone drew her, she couldn't help but smile. It was all she could think about for the rest of the school day.

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"Can we talk about what happened yesterday? At the movie theatre" spoke up Marcus as they sat on his front porch. Bella sighed, feeling her heart rate beginning to pick up at the mention of what happened at that movie theatre. Her hands began to shake a little so she clenched them tightly.

"I saw a balloon in the movie theatre...I followed it and it led me to the corridor that you and Ethan found me in...there was a clown...everything felt wrong and scary and I just ran, the corridor grew longer and longer and the walls began to close in on me, and I thought I was going to die" she explained before growing silent maybe Marcus was quiet because he was shocked. Next minute she heard him laughing, she felt this anger begin to boil inside her at the sound of his laughter.

His smile dropped when he noticed how angry she looked "you're serious?" He said with amusement in his voice.

"Of course I'm serious!"

"Oh come on Bells do you expect me to believe that?!"

"Yes because you're my friend! You saw how scared I was!"

"You sure it's not because you were scared of the movie?" He said with a smirk.

Bella bit her tongue before she shook her head as she got up "I know it sounds crazy but I hoped you of all people would believe me" she said as she stood up to face him.

"I'm sorry Bells but-"

"Don't call me that!....don't talk to me and don't be asking me to hang out" she said quietly as she turned towards her house. Marcus called after her as she entered the house but she ignored him, what an asshole, she thought him of all people would believe her.

She felt humiliated all over again like back in the closet all those years ago and last night, she went to her room, throwing herself onto her bed before she hugged her pillow and began to cry.

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That summer went by slow without speaking to Marcus, she didn't want to know and she didn't care....that was a lie of course she cared, he was her best friend and that clown had broke them apart, she knows what she saw, what she experienced.

Her mom had sent her to go and get some milk from the grocery store since she had spent all summer in her home. I mean once or twice her mom had sent her round to Eddie's home which she always looked forward too even if it was a little awkward at times, she'd always put on her best dress and be full of smiles. The talking was starting to become a little less awkward but it was still awkward.

As she was leaving the store she noticed someone leaning against the wall at the back of the store, panting for breath...Ethan?

"Ethan?" She called out as she made her way over, that's when she noticed his bloody knee "oh my god what happened?" She said with worry.

"It's um nothing?"

"Doesn't look like nothing! What happened? Was it Bowers?" She asked as Ethan shook his head.

"It's okay, I just fell" he said in response as Bella put the milk down and reached for her backpack.

She pulled out a pack of tissues as she kneeled down in front of him. Ethan jumped back a little as the tissue touched the cut "sorry, it might sting a little" she said as she began to wipe some of the blood away. She could feel Ethan looking down at her but she continued cleaning the cut on his knee, once it seemed like the cut was clean enough she pulled out a bandaid from her bag before putting it over his cut.

"There! all done!" She exclaimed as she looked up at him with a smile before standing up. Ethan smiled back at her "t-thanks" he said, words stuttering a little.

"It's okay....I um I've been looking for you actually...I just wanted to say thank you...for the whole movie theatre thing" she said, already feeling the embarrassment after what happened with Marcus.

"It's no problem...are you okay now?" He asked her.

"Uh yeah...just got a bit of a scare that's all, just glad you were there to protect me" she said with a smile before she picked up her milk as she went to turn around and leave.

"I'd do it again!" He called out as she paused in her steps.

"Sorry?" She asked as she turned back around, watching as he nervously played with his sleeves.

"I said I'd do it again...if you needed protecting" he said with a nervous smile.

"See ya around Ethan" she said with a soft smile before she walked away.

She heard a faint "You too Bella" something about it make a smile appear on her face.

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She was surprised when she woke up to the sound of the static of her walkie talkie. "B-Bella are you there?" She sat up as she turned to look at her clock it was 3am. She didn't respond, maybe if she ignored him he'd get the message.

"I'm sorry Bella...I-I should have listened to you, y-you where right! You where so fucking right!" Sobbed Marcus, Marcus was crying? And what did he mean she was right.

"I heard a voice and S-something grabbed me in the dark under my bed, my lamp is broken and I-I I'm scared Bella!" He sobbed, Bella rushed out of her bed to grab for the walkie talkie.

"Hey Marcus it's okay, hey it's okay! I'll be there!" She said before throwing her walkie talkie somewhere and reaching for her dressing gown. She opened her bedside draw and began to rummage through her stuff until she finally found what she was looking for, a small little nightlight in the shape of a moon. Putting it into her pocket she quickly left her bedroom, down the stairs trying not to wake her mom and dad before slowly but quietly leaving the house.

She quickly rushed to the front of Marcus' house as she figured out how to get up. She's watched Richie Tozier climb up to Eddie's window some nights so it can't be too hard right? Grabbing onto a part of it she began to climb up, she didn't realise how scary and how high up it actually was but she forced herself not to look down as she continued to climb up as she got closer and closer to Marcus' window.

She felt relief as she reached the window, a shakey arm reaching forward to knock on the window before she saw Marcus make his way over to open the window. His usually dark slick back hair as now a mess and he had tears coming down his face "h-how?" He muttered as he stared at Bella clutching a part of the roof.

He reached forward and helped to pull her in through his window before shutting it behind him. "Tell me what happened" she said first as Marcus began to pace the room.

"The bulb has gone in my lamp and I heard this voice...like-like a

clown laughing and then it-it grabbed me from under my bed and started to pull at me...B-Bells I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry for not believing you I-" Marcus was tripping over his words, as he started to sob, hands covering his eyes as his body shook a little.

Bella rushed over to him as she pulled him into a hug, his arms quickly reaching out to wrap around her as he kept sobbing his apologies to her. "It's okay, it doesn't matter, you're okay that's the only thing that matters right now" she reassured him.

They stayed like that for a while as Marcus began to slowly calm down before pulling away from Bella and wiping his eyes. "I brought something" she said with a soft smile as she searched for the plug sockets in his room, as she found one right by his bed she pulled the little nightlight out of her pocket and plugged it in.

"Now you'll always have a light even when your lamp is broken" she said as Marcus gave a sad smile. She spent the rest of the night at his, they didn't really sleep but they stayed up most of the night and talked, they had missed speaking to each other so to finally be able to speak again felt like a wash of relief, summer had really sucked without each other.

They stayed together until the sun came up and Marcus had let Bella out through the front door so that she could go back home, their friendship after that felt like it always had been. The only difference was that they were ready to fight the clown if the fucker ever came back to hurt either of them.

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After Summer was over things became a little interesting. Somehow Bella was able to build up the courage after a little of encouragement from her mom she was able to ask if Eddie wanted to go to the movies with her. After that they basically became boyfriend and girlfriend, Marcus thought it was ridiculous and so did Richie too by the looks of things. They would hold hands and give kisses on the cheek and nothing else really, quite innocent and sweet in a way but Marcus did not think they were compatible, fuck what he know about relationships anyway?

Richie came across as a little cold towards her every time she came over to see Eddie, almost like he'd give these evil looks or have a strong look of what she could only describe as jealousy? She wouldn't get in the way of their friendship if that's what's going through his head.

They talked a little more but there was still this awkwardness, maybe because they're neighbours and they're now boyfriend and girlfriend who knows! Maybe it's because he's her first boyfriend and doesn't really know how relationships work.

It didn't last very long because half a year later her dad got a job somewhere else which meant she had to move out of Derry with her family. She had to say goodbye to Eddie which she did with a kiss on the cheek, the worst was saying goodbye to Marcus, god knows if she'd ever see her best friend again, the thought was enough to make her cry.

As she looked in the back window of the car she noticed someone else watching...Ethan? She watched as he gave her a small smile and reached his hand up to wave a goodbye, she gave a sad smile back as she waved.

She continued to look out the back window as they drove away from Derry but even then an unsettling presence was telling her that this would not be the last time she'd see this place.

2. Chapter Two - Ethan

Summary for the Chapter:

This chapter follows Ethan's summer leading up to him leaving Derry.

Sitting at his table he had his notebook out, finishing off the final touches of his drawing. His pencil gracefully sliding on the paper as he finished the eyelashes before adding more to the faint freckles across her nose. He looked up from his book, watching as she sat at the side of the classroom, writing on her paper, the look of concentration on her face as she pressed her pencil against her lips, thinking about her answer.

Sitting next to the window meant the sunlight shun bright through the windows and across her face, her brown eyes looking like honey in the light. The little smile on her face as she finally figured out the answer before writing again. Her smile was enough to make his heart race. He looked back at his drawing of Bella on his page and closed it, slipping the book into his bag to avoid the prying eyes of others in his class.

Bella would never notice him, he was just someone in the shadows, someone that everyone forgets, even the teachers do...even his dad. As the bell rang he quickly grabbed his bag and books before rushing out of school to head home. He'd rather not bump into Henry Bowers and his goons, quiet people like him were always a target to them.

He walked home alone like every other day and quietly let himself into the house. When he entered the house he looked to see his dad at the table, beer in one hand while working on something, he didn't even acknowledge that he was home. It was always the same, since the passing of his mom he became cold, distant...almost like he forgot about his own son. It breaks Ethan's heart because all he wants to do is make his dad proud but he fears that he's just a disappointment.

He walked into the living room to put his bag away and take his drawing book out.

"What you got there?" Called out his dad which actually make Ethan

jump a little with surprise, his dad actually wanted to know? Never mind that his dad was actually talking to him?

"I um...my drawing book" Responded Ethan.

"You didn't tell me you could draw" his dad responded, amusement in his voice. Of course he doesn't know he can draw, because he never wants to know what he's up to. It was silent again between the two before what his dad said next surprised him.

"Can I see?" He asked and Ethan felt his own eyes light up, his dad actually wanted to see his work? Oh wow his dad actually wanted to see his work?!

Ethan felt a smile of his face as he walked over to his dad and handed the book over for him to look. He watched as his dad let go of his beer bottle of took the book. As he opened the book Ethan was sure he saw his dad's eyes light up at the drawings.

"You trace these?" He asked, Ethan shook his head.

"Oh wow" he muttered as he continued to scan the pages.

He turned to his latest drawing and raised his eyebrow as he looked up at Ethan. "This someone you know?" He asked and Ethan could feel himself now feeling a little flustered on the face.

"Um...it's just a girl in my class...Bella" he said quietly.

"Ah Bella...do you like this Bella?" He asked with a smirk but Ethan didn't say anything, biting his lip a little in response.

"Well maybe Bella would like this drawing" he said as he closed the book and passed it back to Ethan.

"So" started his dad as he leaned forward a little.

"You wanna be an artist when you grow up?" He asked.

"Maybe, I don't know yet...I mean I really like to draw, maybe I could sell my art and get us enough money to move out of Derry and get a big house" Exclaimed Ethan as his dad raised his eyebrows with amusement.

"Is that right?" He said with a smile.

"Yeah the house would be hu-" as Ethan expanded his arms out he knocked the beer bottle on the table, spilling all over his dad's paper work. Silence filled the room as they both looked at the papers.

"D-dad I'm sorry" he stuttered, he's fucked everything up.

His dad closed his eyes, loudly exhaling “go to your room” he said quietly but he could see that familiar cold expression on his face.

“I’m really s-“

“-now Ethan!” He said louder, Ethan clutched his book before quietly walking out of the living room and up the stairs to his bedroom.

As he entered his bedroom he climbed onto his bed and grabbed his pillow. He fucked up, for the first time in years his dad actually wanted to know what he was up to, he was making conversation with him and almost a sense of pride in him...now he’s ruined it, his dad will never want to bother again. He clutched onto his pillow and began to sob.

Seems he cried himself to sleep because he woke up an hour or two later, hands still clutching the pillow, his eyes feeling a little sore and his face now feeling sticky from dried tears.

He swallowed as his throat felt dry before he sat up. There was a movie playing at the Derry movie theatre tonight, maybe he should go, give himself time away from the house for a bit. He bit his lip as he thought about it before quietly leaving his room. He slowly walked down the stairs, pausing to see his dad back at the table working, feeling the heartbreak and pain of what happened hours before still in his mind. He shook his head before slowly and quietly making his way out the door.

When he arrived he brought one ticket for himself and a bag of candy, shoving it into his pocket before going to find a seat. It did hurt him seeing all these people here in groups, he had no one. No friends and no family by the looks of things...he had no one. He could feel eyes on him, scanning him up and down, their judgemental eyes. He started pulling on his sleeves, feeling his anxiety beginning to build, feeling like he wanted the world to swallow him whole.

The seats were continuing to fill up which made him more anxious as he looked around.

“Ethan!” Called out a voice causing him to jump a little. As he looked around to the source of the voice his heartbeat almost felt like it was about to pound through his chest as he saw it was Bella Morgan, sitting on the back row of the movie theatre, she called his name?

Ethan looked around before he pointed at himself.

“Yeah!” She responded as she waved her hand, indicating for him to come over. Ethan nervously swallowed as he made his way up the steps towards Bella. She almost took his breath away as he was now standing in front of her she was so beautiful up close, he felt like his heart was doing flips, the way she softly smiled at him and her eyes lit up as he came over.

“You alone?” She asked.

Ethan swallowed before pulling on his sleeves again “um...yeah but it’s fine!” He nervously said before Bella quickly responded back.

“Do you want to sit with us?” She asked causing Ethan’s eyes to almost light up, she’s asking him to sit with her?

“Y-you sure? I mean I-“ he started stuttering a little before Bella smiled back at him.

“Yeah I’m sure” she said with a soft smile.

“Take a seat bud” joined in the boy next to her, Marcus he thinks is his name, a boy in his class who seems to be close friends with Bella. Ethan smiled back, slowly sitting down in the chair next to her. He was sitting with Bella Morgan! The girl he’s had a crush on for god knows how long and she was really sweet too, smiling back at him before she turned to look at the screen.

Slowly the lights went out as the film began, he couldn’t really focus on the movie because the only thing on his mind was the fact that he was sitting next to Bella and she wanted him to sit with her. As the movie continued on Bella whispered that she needed the bathroom before Ethan moved back a little in his seat so that she could get past him, watching as she walked down the steps and out the room.

As time went on there was no sign of Bella coming back, was she okay? Something didn’t feel right and he was starting to feel anxious “She’s still not back?” Whispered Marcus who had moved to Bella’s seat causing Ethan to jump a little.

“No...should we go and find her?” Responded Ethan as he turned to look at Marcus in the darkness, only the light of the screen bringing some light to his face.

Marcus was quiet for a minute before he looked at the screen, watching as the werewolf started tearing someone to shreds. Ethan looked at Marcus’ face of disgust which was enough to make him

chuckle before Marcus quickly turned back to look at him “Yeah let’s go find her”

They both got out of their seats and began to head down the stairs and out the screen room. It was empty out in the front entrance of the movie theatre but the first thing Ethan heard was screams. Both of them turned to look at a door at the end of the corridor before Ethan ran as fast as he could towards the door.

He didn’t even think about what could be happening on the other side, he pulled open the door and yanked a curled up Bella out of the room. Bella went to scream and kick while Ethan called out “Bella! Bella it’s okay!” As he grabbed her face, one hand on each of her cheeks as he forced her to look at him. Her eyes, glistening with tears and wide with fear as she looked at him.

“Hey you’re okay, I promise you you’re okay” he said softly as he watched her beginning to calm down, her bottom lip trembling before she started to sob. Ethan wrapped his arms around her as he pulled her close, he felt her smaller hands clutching onto his jacket as she continued to cry. Nothing else mattered around him right now as he held her close, promising that she’s okay and that he’s here to protect her.

That evening he walked back home with her and Marcus, it was quiet as no one really knew what to say after what had happened. Both Ethan and Marcus couldn’t understand what had happened, she refused to talk about it.

As they got to Bella’s door, Marcus turned to Ethan “I’ll take it from here...thank you for tonight” he said as Ethan gave a soft smile back “it’s okay” he responded before turning away to leave.

.....

How could he have been so stupid?! Who would leave their notebook out on the desk for any asshole to look at?

He was only gone for a minute but when he came back he noticed his book was open. As he sat down the first thing he noticed was black, black scribbles all over the pages. He began to flick through, all his drawings ruined, all this work he had spent so much time on for nothing, only for it to be destroyed. The moment he saw his drawing

of Bella covered in black scribbles of ink he wanted to cry.

Looking up he searched for any sign of who could have done it, not that he would confront them anyway because he knows he wouldn't win. That's when he noticed Henry Bowers looking right at him, smirk on his face as he spun his pen in his fingers, blowing on it as if his work was done.

He wanted to cry, he felt his hands clutching the book hard before he grabbed his things and left. He could hear the teacher calling out for him but he didn't listen, he just continued to walk. He continued walking until he found a shaded area outside near the courtyard away from everyone else before he sat down.

He looked down at his now destroyed drawings before he could feel the tears beginning to build up and his body beginning to shake a little with sobs. All his work, all his emotions, all his time and dedication all destroyed, why? Ethan has never done anything to Bowers, hell he won't even look in his direction but still he chose to ruin something he spent so much work on, how could someone be so mean?

He had his hands over his face as he sobbed. "Hey you okay?" Asked a voice causing Ethan to jump a little as he moved his hands away from his face, as looked up through tear filled eyes he saw a boy in front of him he was pretty sure it was Ben also known as the 'new kid'. He watched as Ben reached into his pocket and pulled out a tissue before passing it to Ethan.

Ethan gave a soft thanks as he took the tissue and wiped his eyes "Can I sit here?" He asked and Ethan nodded his head, watching as Ben moved to sit down next to him.

"Bowers do that?" He asked as he watched Ethan clutching the book. "Y-yeah"

"Can I see?" Ben asked as Ethan hesitantly looked at his own book, he's never heard anything bad about new kid so he doubts he's here to make fun of him.

Hesitantly Ethan handed Ben the notebook, watching as he gently took hold of it like the book was made of glass and looked through the pages.

Although the drawings were now covered in pen scribbles Ben had a look of amazement in his eyes as the slowly turned the pages.

"That's Bella Morgan right?" He asked as he looked at his latest drawing.

Ethan felt his cheeks heating up and a flush of embarrassment as he's now basically exposing himself because why else would you saw a girl in your class.

"It's really good" he said as Ethan look back with surprise

"You think so?"

"Yeah! I mean it looks exactly like her, she's in a few of my classes so...." he said before going a little quiet again. It made Ethan feel a little better, to hear someone else compliment his drawings and not judge him for drawing a girl he clearly has a crush on.

"Thanks" He said softly as Ben handed the book back to him.

"I'm Ben-"

"I know, the new kid....I'm Ethan" he said before Ben gave a soft smile.

The bell rang causing both boys to look towards the sound, that's when Ben got up, clutching onto his bag "I have to get to class but...don't let Bowers upset you, he's just jealous that you're talented" he said as Ethan gave a sad smile back.

"If you need anyone you can always come and find me" suggested Ben.

"Thanks" said Ethan softly

"See you around Ethan" was the last thing Ben said before he walked off to head to class.

He must admit Ben made him feel a little better, from what he's aware Henry Bowers and his gang are not really liked by people in the school, maybe he is jealous but he doubts it.

He looked back at his notebook, it not longer felt of use to him anymore it had been ruined and if he continues to use it, it will just remind him of Bowers' smug face, making him want to punch the smugness off it. He shook his head, leaving the notebook on the ground under the tree as he got up. He breathed out and wiped his eyes, he's strong, he can go back in with a brave face, fuck Bowers!

.....

Ethan got himself a new notebook over the summer, starting fresh with his work. Things were still rough with his dad, he never really spoke to him after the beer incident, things had gone back to how they use to be. A shadow and nuisance in his dad's life. All he wants to do is make his dad proud but he's so cold and distant with him that it feels like he's a failure.

He was walking alone, trying to find some inspiration to draw something in his book. Maybe the creepy house in Derry that everyone always seems to avoid could be an idea, he noticed he had been heading that way without even realising until he was standing right outside it. He tapped his pencil against his lips as he thought about it.

He opened his notebook before hesitantly putting the pencil on the paper.

"Ethan" a whisper, so faint but the sound of it made him go cold. He looked up to see the door of the house open but no one was on the other side.

He stood there staring at the door that's when he noticed something, a red balloon slowly floating across the front of the house.

Hearing the sound of scribbles, Ethan looked down at his notepad as words began to magically appear on the paper 'failure' 'freak' 'ugly' 'loser' 'weirdo' 'coward' all these insults began to appear on the page causing him to panic before Ethan quickly closed the book gasping for air. He closed his eyes, slowly inhaling before he slowly exhaled. He's imagining things, he's going crazy, he must be.

He could feel a presence near him as he kept his eyes closed. As he opened them the first thing he saw was a clown standing right in front of him, it wore a big puffy dirty white outfit and had bright orange hair and had a toothy smile on its face, something about the smile brought shivers down his spine.

"Hello Ethan" the clown said and Ethan felt his breath catch in his throat. He gasped falling back as he looked up at the clown.

"What's the matter Ethan? Don't you want to draw?" The clown teased as Ethan began to shuffle back, the clown stepping forward each time, there was an evil presence about the clown and he needed to get away.

He somehow found the courage from his state of shock to scramble onto his feet as he started to run. He started to run, screaming out for help in hopes that someone would help him “THATS IT RUN LIKE THE COWARD THAT YOU ARE!” Shouted the clown but the voice sounded like it was in his head. Ethan didn’t look back as he continued to run, screaming out for someone to find him “WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I’D CARE ETHAN?!” It was his dad’s voice now filling his head.

“You should float with the clown Ethan, I wouldn’t miss you, you’re a failure, you’re an embarrassment” his dad’s voice had never sounded so much like venom in his head.

“You’re no son of mine” the voices continued as Ethan ran, he was growing tired.

That’s when he tripped on his feet, landing on the floor and feeling a sudden sting on his knee. He quickly got up and continued to run, he could feel the blood trickling down his leg but he ignored it as he ran. He was pretty sure the clown was gone, the voices had stopped but he was too scared to stop.

Eventually he grew tired and ended up stopping by the local store as he caught his breath. He leaned against the wall, panting for breath out of exhaustion and fear, his heart pounding in his chest and his pulse beating loudly in his ears.

“Ethan?” He opened his eyes at the familiar voice of Bella Morgan, he turned to look as he saw her holding a bottle of milk.

“my god what happened?” She said with worry as she rushed over towards him.

“It’s um nothing-“

“-Doesn’t look like nothing! What happened? Was it Bowers?” She asked, looking down at his bleeding leg as Ethan shook his head.

“It’s okay, I just fell” he said in response as Bella put the milk down and reached for her backpack. Ethan watched with confusion as she began to rummage through her bag.

She pulled out a pack of tissues as she knelt down in front of him. Ethan jumped back a little as the tissue touched the cut, feeling it sting at the feeling of it being touched.

“sorry, it might sting a little” she said as she began to wipe some of the blood away.

He looked down at her, looking at the concentrated look on her face as she cleaned his cut. The cute look on her face was enough to distract him from the sting of the cut. She dropped the tissues on the floor before she reached back into her bag, this time pulling out a bandaid and placing it over his cut.

"There all done!" She exclaimed as she looked up at him with the most sweetest smile he had ever seen before she stood up. Ethan smiled back at her "t-thanks" he said, words stuttering a little.

"It's okay....I um I've been looking for you actually...I just wanted to say thank you...for the whole movie theatre thing" she said, she didn't need to thank him for that, the only thing that mattered to him was that she was okay and safe.

"It's no problem...are you okay now?" He asked her.

"Uh yeah...just got a bit of a scare that's all, just glad you were there to protect me" she said with a smile before she picked up her milk as she went to turn around and leave.

He didn't even think about his words before speaking out

"I'd do it again!" He called out as she paused in her steps.

"Sorry?" She asked as she turned back around, Ethan instantly felt the embarrassment and began to play with the sleeves of his jacket.

"I said I'd do it again...if you needed protecting" he said with a nervous smile.

"See ya around Ethan" she said with a soft smile before she walked away.

"You too Bella" He said quietly, he should have felt embarrassed for saying those things but her smile made it all okay, even if a part of him tells him that he'd never have a chance with her.

That night he came back home to his dad watching the tv, he closed the door loud enough for his dad to hear but he showed no acknowledgement of his appearance. As he entered his bedroom he curled up in a ball on his bed, thinking about all those things the clown had said in his dad's voice.

His father had never said any of those things but now he wonders if that's what he thinks of him? Is he really a failure?

.....

Ethan sat on his porch as he looked out into space, he was bored, incredibly bored. He didn't want to go in the house and feel the tension between him and his dad but he didn't have anyone else to play with.

It suddenly went a little shaded as someone now stood in front of him, as he looked up he saw a boy similar to his height. He's pretty sure that it was his neighbour, he's never spoken to him but he's aware that the kid is related to Vic Criss, cousins he thinks they are.

"My mom said I have to play with you" Oh, he cant say he was expecting that. He looked up at the boy surprised but the kid had no expression.

"O-okay" Responded Ethan as the boy moved to sit next to him on the front porch.

This was a little awkward Ethan must admit. "I'm Seb"

"E-Ethan" they both awkwardly reached out and shook hands before it was quiet again.

"Soooo" started Seb as he slowly leaned back a little.

"You like comics?" He asked as he looked at his own hands.

"Y-yeah they're cool" Muttered Ethan.

"Cool....wanna hit the comic book store?" He asked next as he turned to look at him.

Ethan shrugged his shoulders "sure" he responded quietly as they both got up and walked to the comic book store together.

Turns out that visit to the comic book store was what they needed to break the ice between them. They started talking and begining to learn more about each other and suddenly Ethan didn't feel so lonely anymore. Everyday that summer Seb would either be at his door or Ethan would be knock on his door, asking Seb's mom if he can come and hang out with him.

They'd get ice cream, visit the arcade and just talk. They were in a field, some random ass field in Derry which was close to the kissing bridge. Both lying on the grass and looking up at the clouds in the sky.

"Can I tell you something...but you have to promise not to laugh" started Seb as he turned his head to look at Ethan, Ethan turned his head back.

“Okay” He said before they both turned to look at the clouds again.

“Few days before I met you I was chased by a clown....it was really scary but it was like it was something else, it transformed into a zombie...I hate zombies” he confessed and Ethan felt like he was going to be sick, he thought he was the only one who was tormented. After his experience he even questioned if it was some fucking weird hallucination that he had because no one has said about a clown tormenting children in Derry. He also thought about Bella, her screaming and crying in his arms at the movie theatre...maybe it was the clown?

“I’m surprised you’re not laughing” said Seb as the silence broke between them. Ethan nervously swallowed, trying to bring the nausea down as he spoke “t-that’s because I believe you” he responded back causing Seb to lift himself up on his elbows as he turned to look at Ethan.

“I um...I saw the clown too, it chased after me and said some really mean things, even scribbled mean things in my notebook” he explained.

“What did IT say?”

“I don’t really wanna talk about it” he said quietly, the painful things the clown said in his dad’s voice.

“I’m scared Ethan...it’s like it was feeding from my fear, I don’t want IT to feed on anymore of my fears...which is why I’m about to tell you this” he explained, tell him what? Ethan sat up now and so did Seb. They now sat side by side next to each other in the field.

“Recently I’ve been confused, like I’ve been questioning things about myself that I’ve never thought about before...I um...I like girls, I’ve had a crush on girls in my classes before but” he started, Ethan could feel the nerves and fear in his voice as he tried to get to the point of what he wanted to tell him. Ethan kept silent, looking back at him with encouragement and reassurance.

“I’ve um met someone I’ve started crushing on...I....I like Stanley Uris” he confessed.

“Okay” Responded Ethan.

“No I really, REALLY like Stanley Uris” he said, emphasising the

word really.

“And that’s okay” Responded Ethan, a smile began to form on Seb’s face.

“Really?”

“Really” that’s when Seb pulled Ethan into a hug, he must have felt so scared to tell him and how he relaxed in Ethan’s arms as he felt the relief wash over Seb.

“I really like Bella Morgan” confessed Ethan causing Seb to chuckle.

“That’s pretty obvious” he responded with a smirk.

Ethan pulled away from the hug as he looked at him. “What?” That’s when a smile spread on Seb’s face.

“Before we started speaking in school I could see how you looked at her, you’re not very subtle Ethan”

....

Ethan woke up in the afternoon from a nap as he heard something hit the window, as he looked over at the window there was Seb standing in the front yard. Ethan tried to look at his face as something didn’t look right with him. Ethan held up his finger to indicate that he would be a second before he rushed down the stairs to answer the door.

As he did there was Seb standing there, tears in his eyes and sobbing heavily. “H-Henry B-Bowers has been a-arrested....h-he killed V-Vic” he said, voice jumpy and uncontrollable with sobs. He had heard about Henry’s arrest apparently he had murdered his father and people were starting to pin the missing children on Henry but something was telling him that the missing children had something to do with that clown. What he didn’t know was that Henry had killed Vic and Belch.

Ethan pulled Seb into a hug as the boy collapsed in his arms and began to sob harder, gripping onto his shirt. Bowers has killed Seb’s cousin and now Seb was in a state of pain and grief, the only thing Ethan could do was be there for him.

Seb ended up sleeping over at Ethan’s that night, sharing the bed but they didn’t sleep that night. They lay there for hours just talking about anything and everything, Seb cried a few more times and Ethan was there to listen and comfort him.

.....

When Ethan came back to school after the summer the last thing he thought he'd be feeling was heartbreak. He had spent the rest of the summer trying to find a way to build up the courage to tell Bella that he liked her even with the encouragement of Seb. He hoped to tell her on the first day back at school.

All of that came to a halt when he saw her, she was holding hands with Eddie Kaspbrak. Holding hands! He shouldn't over think it, maybe they're just friends, some friends hold hands right? That was until she leaned over and kissed his cheek. He was pretty sure he just felt his heart smash into a thousand pieces.

He swallowed as his throat felt like it was growing weak and tears threatened to spill. This hurt, like really hurt, having a crush sucks because now he's pretty sure this is how heartbreak feels. He clutched his backpack and ran to the bathroom, he couldn't think of anywhere else to go. As he headed to the bathroom he wasn't sure if anyone was in the stalls but he didn't care. He entered one of the stalls, closing it behind him as he began to silently cry. He was stupid to think that someone like Bella would be interested in him, he was stupid to think that anyone would care or even be interested in him.

"Ethan? Ethan you in here?" It was Seb.

"I'm okay! I'm fine! I just need a minute" Called out Ethan as he quickly wiped his eyes.

"No you're not, I just saw Bella and Eddie" he said as Ethan listened to what sounded like him sitting on the bathroom floor next to the stall, talk about gross.

"Look...if Bella can't see you for the kind and caring person that you are that I have grown to know, the one that accepted me for liking both girls and boys and the one who didn't make fun of me over the clown situation...then she's not worth it Ethan" explained Seb as Ethan shook his head, he gets that Seb is trying to cheer him up but he was wrong...Bella would always be worth it to him.

"She'll always be worth it...it doesn't matter if she's with Eddie...I'd still look out for her, I'd still protect her even if she doesn't feel the same way as I do about her" he said as Seb sighed and it went quiet again.

“Listen...lets just skip school today”

Suggested Seb.

“But we have class-“

“-so? Do you wanna wanna go through today feeling like this? I know I wouldn’t”

“But its a school year, it’s the first day of class”

“Then let’s make your first day tomorrow, use today to collect yourself and come back tomorrow as the better person, the strong one” said Seb as Ethan went silent again.

“What about you? H-how are you holding up?” Asked Ethan, it hadn’t been that long since Seb lost his cousin.

He was pretty sure Seb shrug his shoulders as he heard them brush against the stall.

“I’m okay....I guess, but it’s just one of those things were I need to continue on, I can’t let the world stop around me because my cousin is gone” he said muttering a little at the last part.

“I guess we both could use one more day away from school...so what do you say? You up for skipping school today?” Seb asked.

Ethan sniffled as he wiped his eyes with his sleeve before he nodded his yeah and whispering a “Okay”.

He got up and unlocked the door as Seb stood up to face him as he opened his arms for Ethan.

Ethan accepted the embrace, resting his head on Seb’s shoulder as he felt his arms wrap around him. The hug was only brief and quick before they pulled away and Seb placed an arm over his shoulder before they walked out of the bathroom and out of school.

.....

Ethan’s second heartbreak was when he found out Bella was leaving Derry. He shouldn’t be surprised because everyone wants out of this shitty place, he knows he does. He took the time to make his way to her home, he arrive as she climbed into the car. He watched as she sat in the back of the car and looked out the window back window towards Eddie and Marcus.

That’s when he noticed her turn to look at him through the window and he felt like his heart was doing flips. He reached his hand up and waved goodbye to her before she softly smiled and waved back as the

car drove away. He sighed, maybe he was just never meant to be with her but it doesn't mean that he'll stop thinking about her.

He's already planned that he's going to college and study to become a teacher, if his father is not going to give a shit about him then he's going to focus on himself. He didn't leave Derry until he received a letter stating that he got a place in the college of his choice.

"Dad! Dad I got in!" He said gleefully but his dad brushed it off as he watched the Tv. Ethan still felt the hurt but now as he got older he felt this anger inside him. He's kept quiet for too long about the emotional pain his father has given him all these years and now he's done.

"You know what Steven?" the sound of his dad's first name spitting out of Ethan's mouth, causing him to stop looking at the tv and turn to look at him.

"You may not give a shit about me and what I do but now I'm happy! Because I'm going somewhere, I'm getting out of this shitty town and making something of myself! I guess what I'm trying to say is that this is goodbye because you're never going to see me again, I'm going to get a career and live my life...not that you'd care anyway" he spat as he headed up the stairs to pack his things. He's going to move out until the college year starts, thinking about the look of shock on his dad's face was enough to bring a smirk to Ethan's. He was finally moving on.

3. Chapter Three - Sebastian

Summary for the Chapter:

Following Sebastian's summer leading up to him leaving Derry.

Seb really has no choice in who he hangs out with, no one really wants to talk to him because of who he's related to and because who he hangs out with. Although when he says hang out it really means he stands in the background and says nothing while his cousin Vic and his friends bully some poor kid in their sight.

Because you're related to someone in the Bowers gang it seems everyone thinks you behave like them. He doesn't beat up and target poor innocent people trying to go about their day. But maybe he's just as bad as them because although he doesn't bully their poor victims he doesn't seem to say anything to stop them, he has no courage to speak up and tell them it's wrong what they're doing...he just lets it happen.

They don't really speak to him, they just let him string along because he's Vic's cousin, they'd probably rather not have some puny little kid hang out with them but what can they do? They have no choice otherwise Vic would get shit from his parents.

The Bowers gang usually targeted anyone who was quiet or seen as dorky (so him if he wasn't related to Vic) a small group seemed to be their main target Bill Denbrough also known as stuttering Bill, Eddie Kaspbrak, Richie Tozier and Stanley Uris. They seemed like nice people so it was unfair that they were a constant target, although it seemed Henry was giving Bill a free pass due to his little brother going missing.

One day Seb sat on a wall while the group were doing usual stupid shit, at the moment it seemed they had a lighter and were setting their farts on fire, disgusting. He was looking over his maths homework which he knew he would have to do later once he gets home as he let them do their stupid shit.

“Hey flamer where do you think you’re going?!” Called out Patrick, as Seb looked up from his book he looked to see Stanley Uris clutching onto his backpack and rushing to quickly get past the group. As Stan went to quickly get past, Vic put his leg out and the poor boy tripped, landing face first into the ground.

He tried to scramble onto his feet in a panic as Belch and Patrick grabbed hold of Stan before Henry made his way over to him. He watched as him and Vic looked at each other before turning to look at him “Hey Seb wanna be useful for once?” Called out Henry as he looked at him with a smirk.

Seb stayed where he was “did you not hear me? Get your ass up and hit him!” Now barked Henry as Seb hesitantly got off the wall and made his way over, he really didn’t want to do this and he was pretty sure Stan didn’t deserve this. He looked at the group who had smirks on their faces as they held Stan in place for him before he looked over at Stan. His eyes were wide and terrified like he was begging him to please not hurt him.

He can’t do this, he’s not a violent person and he’s not going to hurt someone who doesn’t deserve it just because they want some entertainment. “No” said Seb quietly. They all stopped, looking at him with surprise that Seb was actually speaking up for once and was going against Henry’s orders...you never go against Henry.

“What did you say?” He said, his voice lowered which almost made Seb tremble a little with fear.

‘Be brave Seb’ he thought to himself as he clenched his fist. “I said no!” He spat next as without even thinking he shoved Belch and Patrick off Stan which took them all by surprise. Stan quickly got up, scrambling to his feet and ran for his life down the street while the gang stood in shock.

“Why did you do that?!” Barked Vic as he turned to his cousin.

“H-he doesn’t deserve it!” Responded Seb as the fear now began to kick in, this can’t be good.

Next thing he knew Henry shoved him onto the floor causing him to fall back, he curled up into a ball as he prepared to get the shit beaten out of him “fucking pussy!” He spat before they all turned to walk away. Seb curled out of his ball as he looked at the group

walking away.

Probably if he wasn't Vic's cousin that would have ended differently, he watched as they walked away before Vic quickly turned to look back at him, shaking his head in disappointment before he joined the group.

He now has no one, he's got no one to look out for him and no friends.

.....

Few hours later Seb decided to go to the diner alone, there was a movie playing tonight at the Derry movie theatre but he didn't want to go. It was some sort of werewolf movie but he wasn't into those kinds of things especially after his fear of zombies developed when one time the Bowers gang put on this really disgusting zombie movie, the thought of it now gives him shivers.

He hadn't ordered anything yet, he just decided to sit there. After today and the realisation that he now has no one he wanted to cry, what if he becomes a target to the Bowers gang too? What if school now becomes a nightmare because no one will want to talk to him knowing that he was a background in the Bowers gang.

"Hey um..." started a voice causing Seb to look up with surprise, it was Stan.

"I just wanted to say thanks...for back there, no one has ever helped me out before" he said nervously, giving an awkward smile.

"It's okay" Responded Seb.

He watched as Stan looked back at the empty booth he was sitting in before looking back at him.

"Can I sit here?" He asked which took Seb by surprise, he was technically part of the Bowers gang so why would he want to sit with him?

"Um, Y-yeah" Responded Seb nervously as Stan entered the booth with a soft smile on his face. "I'm Stan" he said as he held his hand out for him to shake

"S-Sebastian but most call be Seb" he responded as he took Stan's hand, his hand felt soft in his and he felt like he felt some sort of

electricity travel through him.

They pulled away from the hand shake and Stan gave him another soft smile “Sebastian’s a nice name” he said causing Seb to smile back, feeling his cheeks begin to feel a little warm. Now he was able to get a better look at Stan’s face, his brown eyes, soft brown curls of his hair and his cute little smile...did he really just think cute smile?

They ended up ordering an ice cream to share at they sat in the booth. Watching as Stan’s spoon would leave his mouth and go back into the bowl, they were practically kissing..just without their lips touching. He shouldn’t be thinking these things, Stan could possibly become a friend or just someone he can talk to when he doesn’t have anyone.

Even after the ice cream they talked for a while, he found out that Stan had went to the movie theatre today with Eddie, Bill and Richie but decided to go into the diner afterwards when he saw him through the window while the others headed home. He found out a few things about him too such as Stan really likes birds, has two of his own and likes to bird watch in his spare time, it’s sweet. Seb told him a few things about himself such as comics he likes to read and stuff like that, Stan likes comics too but he said it mostly Richie and Eddie’s thing.

Seb ended up walking Stan home that night as it turned out he didn’t live too far from him, just a street away from his home apparently. He stood at the front porch as Stan gave a soft smile and waved goodbye before entering his home. Seb loudly exhaled, he felt like his heart was doing little flips right now and he couldn’t explain it.

When he arrived back at home that night so many thoughts were going through his head. He likes girls, he’s crushed on girls in his class...so why is he suddenly feeling these feelings for a boy, a very cute boy for that matter. He kept thinking about Stan’s curls on his head, him eating the ice cream and the cute little smiles he gave him.

He paced up and down his room a little, he was so confused with how he was feeling and he now felt like he was questioning things about himself he’s never questioned before. He stopped his pacing and decided he should probably get some sleep, he can think about

this tomorrow.

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The last day before they finish for summer was pretty quiet, he did everything he could to avoid the Bowers gang that day. He'd rather not confront them especially after yesterday stunt with them even if it is for the best that he no longer hangs out with them.

He never wanted to hang out with them in the first place, he was just so desperate not to be alone in school that he took the opportunity and it seemed better to have the Bowers gang on your side than to be a target to them. If he was honest he was like everyone else, downright scared of them he's heard rumours about messed up shit they've done and he honestly believes the rumours.

In class today he witnessed Henry Bowers go over to Ethan Davis' notebook and scribble all over it, flicking over the pages and digging the pen into the paper as he scribbled. It was mean, he always saw that boy walking around clutching that red book in his hands, it's private.

The look on Ethan's face when he came back to his table was heartbreaking if he was honest. Flicking through the pages and looking on the verge of tears as he looked around the class. He ended up taking his things and leaving the class, the teacher calling out for him and Henry laughing the fucking shitbag.

Part of him wanted to follow Ethan but he didn't know him, he's never spoken to him so who's to say he'd be able to make the kid feel better? He continued on with his work but he felt this anger inside him, in a way with all the children going missing he wishes Bowers was one of them.

At the end of the day it was finally summer and in a way Seb was relieved, finally he could have time to himself where he didn't have to think about school and the stupid dramas of it, he can just relax.

As he walked out of school he noticed the Bowers gang harassing Bill, Eddie, Richie and Stan again but it was quickly put to a stop because Henry's dad was there. Betty Ripsom's mom was standing outside the school too with the police obviously hoping that Betty would come

out of school but no one had heard from her, no one had seen her.

Seb sighed before clutching his backpack and walking back home.

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At one point in the summer his mom asked him to go out and get some air because she was sick and tired of him sitting in the house all day. She suggested going to hang out with Vic but Seb downright refused, never again will he hang out with those people. From what he had heard Patrick Hockstetter had gone missing, if he was honest he's probably more of a psychopath than Henry from what he had seen and heard...has he gone missing because he wished it on Henry?

He was currently sitting in the park, on the bench alone.

"Sebastian" he heard a whisper, he thought he was hearing things at first as he looked around, for a park that's in the summer it was strangely empty. "Find us Sebastian" he definitely heard it that time. Find who? It sounded like a child's voice, a whisper.

He got up off the bench and started to look around for the source of the voice as he continued walking it sounded like it was coming from below him. "Sebastian" the whisper said coming out louder. That's when he noticed the ground below him start to break, parts of it opening up as a rotted hand rose up out of the ground and reached up to grab his leg.

A loud gasp left him as he fell onto his back, more parts of the ground breaking apart as more rotted, zombified hands grabbed at him. The feel of the rotten flesh touching him was enough to make him want to throw up, he tried to scream out but it felt like his screams were stuck in his throat.

He tried to wriggle out of the grab, feeling the feeling skin of the rotten hands drag against his skin, he wanted to cry at the feeling. He kicked and kicked until he had the courage to stomp on one of the hands causing it to let go. He continued moving until the hands let go of him and he quickly got to his feet.

As he got up he stopped mid tracks as he saw a Red balloon, a singular red balloon floating but someone was behind it. Slowly the

balloon rose up into the sky to reveal a clown with bright orange hair and a big toothy grin.

“It seems you found them Sebastian” The clown said as Seb stared back with wide eyes, a shakey breath leaving his throat.

“Come join the clown Seb! You’ll float down there, we all float down there!” It said before it started to laugh hysterically and Seb felt like he could finally scream as he started to run as fast as he could.

Seb continued to run and scream and he’s sure he screamed at one point “there’s a fucking clown chasing me!” But he’s not so sure, he did get some funny looks though. He ended up running into the door of the diner, his face slamming into it causing him to stop in his tracks, that fucking hurt.

He rubbed his nose before with a shakey hand grabbed for the door and pulled it open, moving to sit at one of the booths at the back away from prying eyes that just watched that embarrassing moment.

As he sat down one of the waitress made their way over to them with a little notepad “Can I get you anything kid?” She asked as she looked back at the door he slammed into.

“Um just a water please” he said as he felt his cheeks heat up with embarrassment. The waitress nodded before walking away to get his glass of water.

He still felt like he was shaking after what happened, what the fuck was that? What was with the zombie hands? And what was with the clown? That couldn’t have been real right? Everyone was looking at him like he was crazy so no one else must have seen it.

The waitress came back with his glass of water and Seb gave a quiet thanks before looking at the group of boys entering the diner. It was a whole group of them Bill, Richie, Eddie, the new kid, Ben he thinks his name is and Stan. He watched as they climbed into one of the booths and Stan sat now facing him from his booth.

Stan looked up at him before giving a little shy smile and lifting his hand a little to wave at him. Seb waved back in return before Stan smiled again and turned to talk to his friends. Seb suddenly felt calm after what happened back there, he still felt nauseous at the feel of

the rotten flesh touching him but now he felt calm the moment Stan had came into the diner.

Fuck, he has a crush

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"Sebastian get down here!" Called his mom. Seb sighed, climbing off his bed before making his way down the stairs to his mom in the living room.

"Look at that boy" she said as she pointed out the window. It was Ethan Davis from next door, sitting on his porch, staring into space. "That poor boy looks bored out of his mind! He looks your age go and play with him!" She suggested.

"But mom I've never spoken to him?"

"-well bows your chance! I'm sick and tired of walking past your bedroom and seeing you doing nothing all day! Go out and play with that boy!" She ordered as she turned him around and practically pushed him out the door.

How the fuck is he supposed to introduce himself to a boy in his class he's never even spoken to? although come to think of it...has anyone actually ever spoken to Ethan?

He made his way to Ethan's house before standing right in front of him. The boy looked up at him confused, maybe he should introduce himself?

"My mom said I have to play with you" nice work Seb. The boy looked back at him surprised before he stuttered an awkward "o-okay".

Seb moved to sit next to Ethan on his porch, this was awkward.

"I'm Seb"

"E-Ethan" they both awkwardly reached out and shook hands before it was quiet again. He never thought talking to new people would be so hard.

"Soooo" started Seb as he slowly leaned back a little.

"You like comics?" He asked as he looked at his own hands.

"Y-yeah they're cool" Muttered Ethan.

"Cool....wanna hit the comic book store?" He asked next as he turned to look at Ethan.

Ethan shrugged his shoulders “sure” he responded quietly as they both got up and walked to the comic book store together.

They spent a while in the comic book store, talking about the comics they have read and their favourite heroes before they explored Derry. It became a lot less awkward very quickly, they laughed and joked and Seb couldn't remember the last time he enjoyed being in someone else's company (apart from Stan).

Turns out his mom forcing him to talk to Ethan was a great idea because he really enjoyed hanging out with him. As summer continued Seb would knock on Ethan's door and Ethan would knock on his, he had never seen his mom so happy that he had a friend to hang out with.

One time they were in a field close to the kissing bridge. They both lay on the grass as they looked up at the sky, pointing out clouds and the objects they looked similar too. Friends tell each other everything right? They don't keep secrets?

“Can I tell you something...but you have to promise not to laugh” started Seb as he turned his head to look at Ethan, Ethan turned his head back.

“Okay” He responded before they both turned to look at the clouds again. Okay here goes nothing he thought as he nervously swallowed. “Few days before I met you I was chased by a clown....it was really scary but it was like it was something else, it transformed into a zombie...I hate zombies” he confessed, it went awfully silent between them both but there was no sigh of Ethan laughing or any sigh that he was about to burst out laughing.

“I'm surprised you're not laughing” said Seb as the silence broke between them.

“t-that's because I believe you” he responded back causing Seb to lift himself up on his elbows as he turned to look at Ethan, what? He actually believes him? Well that's a surprise because if he was Ethan he'd think it's complete bullshit or some sort of joke.

“I um...I saw the clown too, it chased after me and said some really mean things, even scribbled mean things in my notebook” he explained.

“What did IT say?”

"I don't really wanna talk about it" he said quietly. Holy shit, Ethan was chased by this clown too? In a way he thought he might have been imagining things because of how everyone was looking at him when he was basically sprinting across Derry before he embarrassingly slammed face first into the diner door. If he was honest he was scared, it was like it was feeding off his fear...what if it comes back? What if it torments him for something else? Like his crush on Stan? Maybe if he tells Ethan then he won't be so scared anymore about his feelings and whatever this is.

"I'm scared Ethan...it's like it was feeding from my fear, I don't want IT to feed on anymore of my fears...which is why I'm about to tell you this" he explained, Ethan sat up now and so did Seb. They now sat side by side next to each other in the field.

He nervously swallowed as he spoke up again.

"Recently I've been confused, like I've been questioning things about myself that I've never thought about before...I um...I like girls, I've had a crush on girls in my classes before but" he started. Ethan kept silent, looking back at him with encouragement and reassurance, it made him feel a little at ease.

"I've um met someone I've started crushing on...I....I like Stanley Uris" he confessed.

"Okay" Responded Ethan.

"No I really, REALLY like Stanley Uris" he said, emphasising the word really.

"And that's okay" Responded Ethan, a smile began to form on Seb's face...he's okay with this? He's not going to laugh or judge him?

"Really?"

"Really" that's when Seb pulled Ethan into a hug, he was so scared to tell him but now he's never felt so relieved.

"I really like Bella Morgan" confessed Ethan, obviously trying to make him feel better about having a crush but it made Seb chuckle.

"That's pretty obvious" he responded with a smirk.

Ethan pulled away from the hug as he looked at him. "What?" That's when a smile spread on Seb's face.

"Before we started speaking in school I could see how you looked at her, you're not very subtle Ethan"

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He was currently in his room, looking through a comic Ethan had let him borrow before he heard a knock on his bedroom door.

“Yeah!” He called out as his mom entered, she was awfully quiet as she came to sit down on his bed.

“Sebastian...there’s something I need to tell you, could you close the comic please?” She said, her voice was very quiet and Seb knew that something was up.

Seb closed the comic book before looking up at his mom. “Um...I don’t really know how to tell you this but...Henry Bowers has been arrested...he’s murdered his father and they think he has been involved in the disappearance of the other children in Derry” she started, oh wow, Seb can’t say that he’s surprised that Henry has been arrested for murder but he’s pretty sure Henry doesn’t have anything to do with the missing children...he thinks that was the clown.

“T-there’s more.....Reginald and Vic...were found dead in his car” she said and Seb felt like the whole world stopped, Henry murdered his cousin? His cousin is dead? Seb felt this sickness and sudden pain inside him. His cousin his dead, the last time he properly saw his cousin he had shook his head at him in disappointment for defending Stan.

Seb didn’t say anything, he climbed off his bed and headed down the stairs. He’s pretty sure his mom was watching him wondering where he was going but he paid no attention. He opened the front door he didn’t think as made his way to Ethan’s front garden, he wanted to see Ethan, he wanted his friend.

He found a rock on the ground before he picked it up and threw it at his window. He looked up as Ethan poked his head at the window and put a finger up to indicate he’ll be just a second before he was gone. Seb made his way to the door, now feeling the sobs beginning to kick in and make his body feel heavy as he dragged his feet to the door.

As the door opened Ethan’s smile dropped as he looked back at him.

“H-Henry B-Bowers has been a-arrested....h-he killed V-Vic” he said, voice jumpy and uncontrollable with sobs, he had no control of his voice anymore.

Ethan looked back at him, eyes wide before he pulled him into a hug. He collapsed into Ethan's arms, sobbing loudly and heavily as he clutched onto Ethan's shirt.

He stayed at Ethan's that night, he gave him some of his own pjs and he was pretty sure his mom came to the door at one point before Ethan explained that Seb wants to stay the night. His mom likes Ethan, always telling him how she thinks he's such a sweet boy and a perfect example of someone he should be friends with. Well she was right because Ethan now climbed onto the bed with him, facing each other. His brown eyes looking back at him as he took Seb's hand and held it tightly.

"What's going through your mind?" He asked. Seb swallowed as he looked at Ethan's hand holding his before he looked back up at him "that could have been me too...I was hanging out with them at one point...he could have killed me too"

"But he didn't" said Ethan softly as it went quiet again.

"God he was such an asshole to people including me but....but I miss him" he said as he felt this throat grow weak and tears begin to build up again.

"I know...it's okay to miss him, he's still your family" Responded Ethan before Seb began to cry again. Ethan shuffled closer, wrapping his arms around Seb as he cried his heart out. Ethan kept hold of him, rubbing his shoulder as he comforted him.

They spent the rest of the time talking about anything and everything, he thinks it was Ethan's idea to try and distract him from the news of his cousin. For that night it helped but now it's always going to be with him, knowing that Bowers killed Vic. He can't remember if he slept that night but he knows that Ethan stayed with him the whole time and that's all he needed.

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The first day back at school was pretty hard. When he entered all he could hear was people talking about Henry Bowers and what he did, he's not surprised because of course it's going to be the talk of the school he murdered his father and two others and now they're pinning the missing children on him too, although him and Ethan

know that the missing children is something completely different.

As he got further into school he wondered if this was such a good idea and maybe he should just turn back around and skip school for the day. That's when he noticed Ethan rushing to the bathroom, clutching onto his backpack tightly and looking on the verge of tears.

Seb looked around and that's when he saw it, Bella Morgan and Eddie Kaspbrak by her locker, holding hands. Oh no....poor Ethan, Seb followed Ethan into the bathroom.

"Ethan? Ethan you in here?" He called out, he could hear little snuffles coming from one of the stalls.

"I'm okay! I'm fine! I just need a minute" Called out Ethan in response, that was clearly a lie he's just had his heart broken.

"No you're not, I just saw Bella and Eddie" he said as he leaned against the stall and slid down to sit on the floor.

"Look...if Bella can't see you for the kind and caring person that you are that I have grown to know, the one that accepted me for liking both girls and boys and the one who didn't make fun of me over the clown situation...then she's not worth it Ethan" explained Seb, he got to know Ethan over the summer and he is one of the sweetest people he's ever met, who was there for him at a really tough time. If Bella couldn't see that then it's her loss.

"She'll always be worth it...it doesn't matter if she's with Eddie...I'd still look out for her, I'd still protect her even if she doesn't feel the same as I do about her" he said as Seb sighed and it went quiet again. Of course he'd be like that about her, anyone could fucking see the way he feels about her and even though she's broke his heart he's still head over heels for her.

"Listen...lets just skip school today"

Suggested Seb.

"But we have class-"

"-so? Do you wanna wanna go through today feeling like this? I know I wouldn't"

"But its a school year, it's the first day of class"

"Then let's make your first day tomorrow, use today to collect yourself and come back tomorrow as the better person, the strong one" said Seb as Ethan went silent again.

"What about you? H-how are you holding up?" Asked Ethan, it

hadn't been that long since Seb lost his cousin. He sighed before shrugging his shoulders

"I'm okay....I guess, but it's just one of those things were I need to continue on, I can't let the world stop around me because my cousin is gone" he said muttering a little at the last part.

"I guess we both could use one more day away from school...so what do you say? You up for skipping school today?" Seb asked.

He heard Ethan sniffing before whispering a "Okay".

He got up as he heard Ethan unlocking the door, as he turned to face him Ethan's eyes were a little red and puffy from crying so he pulled him into a hug. Ethan rested his head on Seb's shoulder as he wrapped his arms around him.

The hug was only brief and quick before they pulled away and Seb placed an arm over his shoulder as they walked out of the bathroom and out of school.

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Sebastian didn't leave Derry until he got a letter in the mail that he got into the college of his choice.

His mom suggested that they move of out Derry before the semester starts, the place held too many bad memories and it seemed like a chance to start over.

It was a different college to Ethan's choice so it seemed that they'd be going their separate ways which hurt he must admit but he hopes that they'd meet again one day. Turns out Ethan was also packing his backs as he was packing his.

4. Chapter Four - Marcus

Summary for the Chapter:

Following Marcus' summer leading up to him leaving Derry.

Marcus couldn't really understand what had happened. There he was standing in the main entrance of the movie theatre watching his best friend scream and cry in fear while Ethan Davis held her and promised her that she's okay and that she's safe.

A lot of things were going through his mind first of all Bella, of course Bella is the first thing going through his head. What happened? Why was she in a closed off room? And what had made her scream and panic so much? He felt useless as he stood there watching her cry her eyes out.

The second thing that was going through his mind was quiet boy Ethan Davis. He had only spoke to them today because Bella offered him a seat but the way he held her, the way he caresses her cheeks so that she could look into his eyes, the way he was so protective of her. Hell, even him running to the door to grab her the moment he heard her screaming without even thinking about what's on the other side. He doesn't know why the way Ethan held Bella played on his mind so much.

"Hey lets get out of here Yeah? Before assholes start coming out" spoke up Marcus as he walked over to help pull Bella up onto her feet.

They all walked to Bella's home together, Ethan had walked them both up to the door before Marcus said he'd take over. He offered Ethan and thank you before the boy gave a soft smile and walked back home. Marcus couldn't help but watch the boy walk away, something about him playing in his mind.

Marcus helped Bella to her room because she was still in a state of shock as he made his way over to her dresser and began to search for some pjs for her, she took the pjs before quietly making her way to her bathroom to get changed as Marcus sat on her bed waiting.

It was quiet as Bella came back in the room, walking over to join Marcus on the bed.

"What happened?" Started Marcus because he felt like he had a right to know, he had never seen his best friend so terrified. Bella went to open her mouth before closing it again. Marcus raised his eyebrows at her as he waited for a response from her.

"I'm...I'm not ready to talk about it" she said as she began to play with the sleeves of her pj shirt. Marcus sighed as he leaned forward a little "I'm sorry I didn't do a lot to help" he apologised as Bella looked back at him.

"Well you're here now?"

"But Ethan was the one who saved you" he said as Bella looked back down at her sleeves.

"If anything seems quiet Ethan Davis was your knight in shining armour Bells" he said as he saw a small smile appear on her face.

"I guess he was" she whispered.

Marcus ended up staying the night at Bella's and they shared the bed like they always do, Bella put her old night light on for Marcus but he wonders if it was for her too after whatever had happened back at the movie theatre. Whatever reason he always appreciates Bells looking out for him.

"Goodnight Bells"

"Goodnight Mucus" Marcus scoffed at the nickname as he snuggled up into bed.

Marcus woke up the next day to a pillow smacking him in the face "you have to go! I need to get ready for school!" Called out Bella as she opened her dresser draws to look for something to wear.

"Okay, okay I'll go! See ya later Bells!" He said as he climbed off the bed and left the bedroom, still in last nights clothes. Although his tired dumbass didn't seem to notice the first step as he tripped, grabbing the banister before he could fall down.

"What was that?!" Called out Bella's mom as he paused and looked towards the kitchen.

"Hi Mrs Morgan!" He said as he finally came down the stairs to Bella's mom raising her eyebrows at him he didn't wait for her to question why he stayed the night.

"I'll be out of your hair Mrs Morgan" he said as he made his way out the door to get ready for school.

School was a little awkward today, because there was tension between them after what happened yesterday. Bella didn't want to talk about it and Marcus was still completely clueless about what happened to his friend.

They spent lunch outside seeing as the weather was nice and it was the last day before summer. Although he didn't notice the red book next to Bella until he turned to look at her holding it. Bella turned to look at Marcus as he raised an eyebrow at her.

"We can't look it's rude!" She said

"They won't know!" He responded as he reached forward to snatch the book from her hands.

She shook her head as she turned away. Well Marcus was going to have a look and didn't care if it was rude or nosy. As he did he was welcomed by drawings that had been scribbled all over, under the scribbles they were pretty good drawings. Either this kid has some anger issues or someone else did this if that was the case it was most likely one of the Bowers gang members to scribble on the pages.

"Man some asshole really did a number on this guys drawings, scribbled black shit all over them....Bells?" The last drawing in the book made him pause, he was one faced with an incredibly realistic drawing of Bella.

"You need to look at this" he said as Bella curiously turned her head, before her eyes went wide. He watched as her eyes examined the drawing, he could see the a look of amazement in her eyes and her cheeks going a little pink.

"Is that me?" She said

"Either that or a strong look alike, Bella Morgan has a secret admirer" he smirked as he put the book down. People who he suspected to have drawn the picture started to cross his mind but he had a feeling he knew exactly who had drawn it.

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"Can we talk about what happened yesterday? At the movie theatre" spoke up Marcus as they sat on his front porch. He watched as Bella

sighed, holding her now shaking hands together as she spoke up.

"I saw a balloon in the movie theatre...I followed it and it led me to the corridor that you and Ethan found me in...there was a clown...everything felt wrong and scary and I just ran, the corridor grew longer and longer and the walls began to close in on me, and I thought I was going to die" she explained before growing silent, what? Clowns? Balloons? Walls closing in? She had a strange sense of humour he'll give her that. Marcus started to laugh at her ridiculous story as she turned to look at him.

His smile dropped when he noticed how angry she looked "you're serious?" He said with amusement in his voice.

"Of course I'm serious!"

"Oh come on Bells do you expect me to believe that?!"

"Yes because you're my friend! You saw how scared I was!"

"You sure it's not because you were scared of the movie?" He said with a smirk.

Bella bit her tongue before she shook her head as she got up "I know it sounds crazy but I hoped you of all people would believe me" she said as she stood up to face him.

"I'm sorry Bells but-"

"Don't call me that!....don't talk to me and don't be asking me to hang out" she said quietly as she turned towards her house, stomping away with her fists clenched at her sides. Marcus called after her as she entered the house but she showed no signs of listening to him.

Marcus sighed as he closed his eyes...he's fucked up. It sounds ridiculous her story, does she really expect him to believe that? It sounds crazy. Is it some sort of killer clown? He's not heard anything about a clown terrorising people in Derry. He saw how terrified she was as Ethan tried to calm her down but a clown terrorising her and closing the walls in on her can't be right, this is like something you'd hear in a nightmare and nightmares aren't real.

He turned around as he slowly entered his house, his chest feeling heavy with guilt...he could have dealt with it a lot better and now he's lost a friend.

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His mom had told him to get his ass out of bed and get some stuff from the store for her because apparently she was sick and tired of walking past his bedroom to see him in bed. Fuck he missed Bella, he missed how they'd hang out and laugh and joke, he missed her calling him Mucus over the walkie talkie. He missed everything about his best friend and it was his fault.

He hates going to the store, he hates how incredibly bright it is in there, the idea of bumping into someone he knows and the stupid fucking music that plays through the speakers. On his list was bread, milk and a few other things. He grabbed his basket and made his way around the store, collecting things before he noticed something red at the corner of his eye. As he peaked into one of the next aisles he noticed a red balloon...Bella mentioned something about a balloon back at the movie theatre but a parade had been going on in Derry, the balloon was probably from there right?

He shook his head as he continued on with his mom's shopping before going to pay for the things. As he went to leave the store, bags in his hands he saw the balloon again, slowly making its way to the back door of the store. Now Marcus was intrigued, the back door was open and the balloon was slowly making its way there.

He started to follow the balloon, going to the back of the store before the balloon began to slowly go down the steps behind the door. He stopped as he saw how dark it was behind the door and down the stairs, almost like it led to a dark abyss.

"Fuck that" Muttered Marcus as he turned back around and left the store.

As he walked away he looked back as he felt a strange uneasy feeling inside, he felt like his heart was racing as he walked away but he couldn't explain why.

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When he thinks about what had just happened this was definitely not what he had planned when he forced himself out of bed this morning.

He was on his way back home as he spent the day wondering around Derry bored out of his mind before he saw Henry Bowers and his

fucking goons, well two of them anyway. They were standing around talking before their eyes clocked the sight of Marcus walking alone.

“Where’s your girlfriend? Kind of hoping she’d be around!” Called out Bowers as Marcus scoffed and shook his head. Him and Bella still hadn’t spoke since Marcus basically laughed in her face, he still feels shitty about it but he doesn’t know how to go about apologising to her.

“She’s not my girlfriend” Responded Marcus as he walked past them. “Sounds about right...the way she had her hands all over me” said Bowers causing Marcus to stop in his tracks. He could hear the other two snickering and three sets of eyes looking at him, feeling like they were burning into the back of his head.

“Yeah...I saw the way she looked at me in school, once school was over she couldn’t help herself” Marcus clenched his fist as he heard Henry start to walk over to him. He’s bullshitting, Bella isn’t like that...how dare he speak about her that way.

“You’re full of shit” spat Marcus, back still turned, causing Belch and Vic to start laughing.

“Am I? Or are you just jealous she hasn’t had a turn on you? I bet I’m not the only one” Marcus could feel the anger inside him, he refuses to have Bella’s life made a living hell over lies and poison Henry Bowers and his goons spread...like Beverly Marsh.

“She’ll do you, all you have to do is ask....that’s what I did” Marcus could hear his fucking smirk as Bowers now stood right behind him. That was it, without thinking Marcus turned around and swung his fist, hitting Bowers directly in the face causing him to fall back.

He watched as Bowers stood up, complete shock on his face which amused him, he made Henry Bowers shocked but his actions. He watched as Bowers spat out blood from his mouth, fucking piece of shit deserved it.

“Piece of shit!” Spat Henry as he shoved Marcus onto the floor. Stepping back as Vic and Belch watched in the back, seems this was just for Henry, now that Marcus really has made an enemy.

“You wanna fight?” He said as Marcus turned to look up at him.

“Don’t be a little fucking bitch, get up and fight me!” He spat as

Marcus got up onto his feet.

As he was about to swing for him again a fist collided with his face causing Marcus to fall back onto the ground. Next he felt Henry Bowers on top of him, grabbing him by the shirt before he started repetitively punching him. Marcus tried to fight back but every punch was causing more pain making him feel weaker.

He tried to push Bowers back but he was too weak, smaller compared to him.

“Leave him alone!” Called out a girl’s voice. Both turned to look in the direction of the voice. Three people stood there Beverly Marsh, Richie Tozier and Eddie Kaspbrak.

He looked back at Marcus before looking over at the group, seems he was not in the mood to fight them as he let go of his shirt, shoving Marcus to the ground as he called him a fucking loser before him, Vic and Belch walked away.

Marcus groaned as he closed his eyes, listening to the sound of footsteps making their way over to him. “Holy shit dude you punched Henry Bowers in the face!” Exclaimed Richie as Marcus opened his eyes again. As he did he saw three people looking down at him “You okay?” Asked Beverly before she held out her hand for him.

“Face hurts” Muttered Marcus as he accepted her hand before she pulled him up and they took him aside to find somewhere to sit. Beverly held both sides of his face as she examined the damage “his nose is bleeding” she said.

“Well this calls for the treatment of the one and only Doctor Ed’s get in there boy!” Said Richie in the most terrible cockney accent he has ever heard.

“Shut up” Responded Eddie as he unzipped his fanny pack as he searched around for things.

“I need tissues” he muttered.

“What for?”

“His nose! It’s bleeding!”

“Tip your head back” Said Richie before Marcus tipped it back a little.

"No don't do that!" Responded Eddie as he pushed Marcus' head back down.

"You're supposed to tip your head back to stop the blood from dripping out-"

"-then you'll be swallowing the blood!" Argues Eddie.

"Tip it back it's fine-"

"- no you don't tip it back or you'll swallow the blood! Blood doesn't agree with the stomach"

"He'll be fine"

"- I know what I'm talking about genius!"

"Why what happens?"

"It makes you throw up dumbass!"

"Have you ever thrown up from swallowing blood?"

"No because I don't tip my head back like you asshole!" Spat Eddie, doing this little hand thing as he argued with Richie.

He watched as they bickered and argued while he pinched his nose before turning to look at Beverly who looked completely fed up with them before she pulled a tissue out of her pocket and handing it over to him.

Marcus gave a muffled thanks and he took the tissue and placed it over his nose. The two had finally stopped bickering as Eddie went back over to Marcus, face close as he pinched just below the bridge of Marcus' nose.

"You sure you're doing it right?" Said Richie

"Of course I'm doing it right! You pinch just below the bridge of the nose because it helps to stop the bleeding!" He Responded back before Eddie looked back at Marcus. If he's honest he understands why Bella is attracted to him as Eddie's big brown eyes looked back at him.

Seeing him close up he can see that Eddie does have a cute little face he thinks to himself as Eddie's eyes scanned his face for any other damage. "Is he gonna be okay?" Asked Beverly as Eddie's eyes looked at his "he's got a black eye but he should be okay we just need ice" Explained Eddie as he kept his eyes on him before moving the tissue away once he was sure the bleeding had stopped. His face looked grossed out as he took the tissue before running to the nearby bin to throw the tissue away.

“Think my mom has ice in her freezer” Said Richie as they all stood up. They decided to head to Richie’s, Bev and Eddie got on their bikes while Marcus sat on the back of Richie’s. Some reason he could feel himself blushing a little as he wrapped his arms around Richie, holding on tight as they made their way to his house.

Once they had arrived they all sat on Richie’s pouch while Richie ran in to get some ice. “So what happened?” asked Beverly.

“He was saying things....disgusting things that aren’t true about Bella” explained Marcus.

“Bella Morgan?” Asked Eddie, now sounding concerned.

“Yeah he said sexual things about her and I guess I just snapped” he continued as he looked at his fist, if he’s honest it actually hurts a little after punching Bowers.

“Tried to spread rumours?” Asked Beverly as Marcus nodded his head.

“I know how that feels” Muttered Beverly, Marcus never believed the rumours about Beverly where as a lot of people did, he always suspected it had something to do with Bowers.

“Your ice had arrived Mr Hayes!” Exclaimed Richie in some stupid posh accent as he jumped out his door, holding a bag filled with ice causing Marcus to chuckle, Beverly to roll her eyes while Eddie shook his head.

Richie walked over before kneeling in front of Marcus and placing the ice bag over his eye. “Sorry that you’re not getting full view of all of this!” Smirked Richie as he indicated towards his own face causing Marcus to chuckle a little and his cheeks to warm up. He reached his hand up to now take hold of the bag, brushing against Richie’s hand for a second causing his face to now feel warmer. What is wrong with him? Why is fucking Richie Tozier making him feel like this?

Richie moved to sit next to Marcus on the step.

“Bowers was talking bad about Bella Morgan” started Beverly

“Oh Eddie’s play date?”

“Shut up Richie!”

Richie shrugged his shoulders “anyway it’s about time someone hit him, you’ve got balls” he said causing Marcus to smile a little as he muttered a little thanks.

Eddie moved back to face Marcus again as he pulled the bag a little away from his face to examine the eye. "Swelling has gone down but your eye will be bruised for a while" he said before taking the bag of ice away that was now beginning to melt.

"Does she know what's been said?" Asked Beverly as Marcus shook his head.

"Are you gonna tell her?" Asked Eddie.

"I don't know, me and Bella...we've kind of fell out" he sighed as he looked at his bruised fist.

"You should talk to her, try and work things out, he might have been doing it to get a reaction from you but if Henry does say things she gonna need you on her side" said Beverly as Marcus gave a sad smile. "She's got us too" joined in Eddie as he gave a smile back.

"Yeah" Muttered Richie.

"Thanks guys...and for helping me out, you didn't need to"

"Hey you punched Henry Bowers you deserve all the awards!" Exclaimed Richie causing everyone to start laughing, maybe he'll go down in history for being the first one to give Henry a taste of his own medicine...even if he did lose. He's now also questioning why he feels an attraction to Richie Tozier, maybe it's his sense of humour.

.....

"Mom my lamps not working" Called out Marcus as he flicked the switch on and off. This could not be happening, he needs his lamp, of course it would decide to break on him.

"You'll just have to sleep without it tonight!" Responded his mom "I can't!"

"Marcus I don't have any other lamps, I'll look for one tomorrow"

Fuck it he's sleeping with the bedroom light on by the looks of things. He lay back in bed while he waited for his mom to come in, shaking her head as she saw the bedroom light on "oh come on Marcus, you're thirteen, you're too old to be scared of the dark it's silly" she said as she turned the light off and shut his door.

He would have got up and turned it back on but now he was too scared to climb off his bed. He lay down in the darkness as he stared up at the ceiling, trying to think of something, anything to distract him from the darkness around him.

“Marcus” said a faint whisper causing his eyes to widen, he was hearing things right?

“Marcus” there it was again.

“Come float with us” the voices whispered and he felt himself go short of breath, he must be hallucinating.

He swallowed as he closed his eyes, slowly counting to five to himself before slowly opening his eyes. The voice is in his head, he’s just paranoid because he’s in the dark. As he opened his eyes something reached up and grabbed him, causing him to yell out. He went to move before he felt something else grab him, it felt like multiple sets of sharp hands grabbing at his arms, legs, torso.

“Help! Help!” He yelled out but he got no response, the claws began to dig into his body causing him to cry out as he tried to move away and pull out their grasp. That’s when he noticed a dark shadow, the sound of movement from under his bed. He began to whimper as he saw the shadow get bigger and bigger, he could feel warm blood beginning to drip from the claws digging into his body along with sharp stings.

As he finally saw what the shadow was and he felt like his screams were trapped in his throat. A clown...it’s a clown, a clown like Bella has said, it laughed and yelled out as it grabbed Marcus, pinning him down on his bed. “Believe her now Marcus?” It grinned causing Marcus to cry out.

“Such beautiful fear, you’ll do just fine” it said, voice so dark and sinister as it drooled, the saliva dripping down on him. The multiple sets of claws now scratching down his body, dragging down along with the clowns. He began to scream out in pain and sob for his mom as he closed his eyes. There was nothing, why wasn’t his mom coming to help him?

“Oh mommy! Mommy” mimicked the clown causing Marcus to cry harder, tears streaming down his face while he cried out in fear and pain. He was going to die, maybe it’s what he deserves for not believing Bella....he tried to move but now he felt the sets of claws now pulling him down.

He wriggled and moved away from the hands, trying to fight back as he fell off the bed as the clown laughed at his weak attempt to get

away. The clown now clawed at his ankles as he tried to reach for the door. He continued to cry out for his mom in hopes that his mom would hear him as he kicked and screamed in an attempt to get away from the clown.

“Come float with us Marcus....we all float down here” it chuckled.

Marcus now reached for the bedroom door and grabbed the door handle, as the clown’s arm was about to extend and grab him he got the door open. It seems his mom left the landing light on because now brightness entered his room and the clown was gone.

Marcus collapsed onto the floor, shuffling into a corner in his bedroom, body shaking as he continued to sob. His whole body shaking and bleeding. Bella, he needs Bella...he was so sorry for not believing her, maybe he deserved what had just happened.

He stumbled onto his feet as he grabbed for the walkie talkie at his bedside before retreating back to the corner of the bedroom.

“B-Bella are you there? I’m sorry Bella...I-I should have listened to you, y-you where right! You where so fucking right!” His words were babbled and came out his mouth fast as he called out for her. He didn’t know if she was listening but he continued “I heard a voice and S-something grabbed me in the dark under my bed, my lamp is broken and I-I I’m scared Bella!”

He had never felt so relieved to hear the sound of the static of the walkie talkie as Bella spoke “Hey Marcus it’s okay, hey it’s okay! I’ll be there!” she was gone again. Marcus looked at the blood now drying up on his pjs, he can’t let her see him like this. He walked over to his dresser draws and pulled out a fresh pair of pjs as he got dressed, getting a small glimpse at the scratches on his body. He stayed by his bedroom door as he waited for Bella, he assumed she’d knock at his front door, what he didn’t expect was to see her at his window, clutching the roof.

Marcus quickly made his way over to open the window for her “h-how?” He muttered as he stared at Bella clutching a part of the roof. He’s surprised, maybe she is more daring than he thought. He reached forward and helped to pull her in through his window before shutting it behind him. “Tell me what happened” she said first as Marcus began to pace the room.

“The bulb has gone in my lamp and I heard this voice...like-like a clown laughing and then it-it grabbed me from under my bed and started to pull at me...B-Bells I’m so sorry, I’m so sorry for not believing you I-“ Marcus was tripping over his words, as he started to sob, hands covering his eyes as his body shook a little.

Bella rushed over to him as she pulled him into a hug, his arms quickly reaching out to wrap around her as he kept sobbing his apologies to her. “It’s okay, it doesn’t matter, you’re okay that’s the only thing that matters right now” she reassured him.

They stayed like that for a while as Marcus began to slowly calm down before pulling away from Bella and wiping his eyes. He couldn’t tell her the full extent of what happened, he couldn’t scare her like that. “What happened to your eye?” She asked as she pointed at the black eye.

“Bowers” was all he said, again he couldn’t break it to her what had really happened.

“I brought something” she said with a soft smile as she searched for the plug sockets in his room, as she found one right by his bed she pulled a little nightlight out of her pocket and plugged it in.

“Now you’ll always have a light even when your lamp is broken” she said as Marcus gave a sad smile, there she was, always looking out for him.

She spent the rest of the night at his, they didn’t really sleep but they stayed up most of the night and talked, they had missed speaking to each other so to finally be able to speak again felt like a wash of relief, summer had really sucked without each other.

Bella had pulled him close while gently caressing his face “You okay?” She asked as Marcus nodded his head. She gave a sad smile while pulling him closer.

“It’s a coward, to come after us in the dark...next time we’ll be ready to kick its ass” she said causing Marcus to laugh a little.

“Bells and Mucus...we make quite a team” he said as she laughed back.

“Yes we do”

They stayed together until the sun came up and Marcus had let Bella

out through the front door so that she could go back home, their friendship after that felt like it always had been. The only difference was that 'Bells and Mucus' were ready to fight the clown if the fucker ever came back to hurt either of them.

.....

First day back at school was definitely interesting. Bells was now dating none other than that little Eddie Kaspbrak, sure Eddie was sweet and really cute but something about them together just did not work out. It looked odd, they held hands and gave cheek kisses but it looked so fucking awkward.

All this relationship crap was making him sick, he headed into the bathroom and went to the last cubicle at the end of the bathroom. He was debating if to just stay in the cubicle and skip class, he didn't really have the energy to go to class, that's when he heard the sound of fast little feet entering and closing the one of the doors before the sound of sniffles filled the room.

He was about to speak up and ask whoever it was if they were okay until he heard another pair of feet enter the bathroom.

"Ethan? Ethan you in here?" It was Sebastian Miller. So Ethan is crying in the toilets?

"I'm okay! I'm fine! I just need a minute" Called out Ethan.

"No you're not, I just saw Bella and Eddie" said Sebastian in response...Bella and Eddie? Ethan is upset about Bella and Eddie?

"Look...if Bella can't see you for the kind and caring person that you are that I have grown to know, the one that accepted me for liking both girls and boys and the one who didn't make fun of me over the clown situation...then she's not worth it Ethan" oh my god...it's so obvious now that he looks back, that's why he couldn't stop thinking about Ethan at the movie theatre, the way he was with Bella played on his mind. Ethan has a thing for her....was the drawing his? It would make sense. Also the fact that Sebastian had also been attacked by the clown? The thought was enough to make his hands tremble a little.

"She'll always be worth it...it doesn't matter if she's with Eddie...I'd still look out for her, I'd still protect her even if she doesn't feel the

same way as I do about her” oh wow...Marcus actually felt his heart swell listening to this, this sounded like more than a crush and if he’s honest he couldn’t see Eddie being this protective over Bella.

“Listen...lets just skip school today”

Suggested Seb.

“But we have class-“

“-so? Do you wanna wanna go through today feeling like this? I know I wouldn’t”

“But its a school year, it’s the first day of class”

“Then let’s make your first day tomorrow, use today to collect yourself and come back tomorrow as the better person, the strong one” said Seb as Ethan went silent again.

“What about you? H-how are you holding up?” Asked Ethan, oh shit yeah, he heard what Bowers did the whole school is talking about it, he can’t be surprised.

“I’m okay....I guess, but it’s just one of those things were I need to continue on, I can’t let the world stop around me because my cousin is gone” he said muttering a little at the last part.

“I guess we both could use one more day away from school...so what do you say? You up for skipping school today?” Seb asked.

He heard a sniffle before a cubicle door was unlocked and then the sound of footsteps leaving the bathroom.

Marcus exhaled as he fall back a little into the seat, that was a fucking lot to take in.

As it got to lunch he saw Richie at a table by himself with the most sour look on his face, it was cute to be honest, as he looked in Richie’s eye direction there was Bella and Eddie sitting at a table together. If anything he’d think Richie had a thing for Eddie.

Marcus didn’t even ask before he sat next to Richie “I know right? They look so awkward” Said Marcus as Richie turned to look at him.

“He’s been holding her hand for ten fucking minutes but I don’t think they’ve said a fucking word!” Exclaimed Richie as he gestured in their direction.

“What’s your reason for not liking them together anyway?” Asked Marcus and that’s when he noticed Richie stutter a little “I-I just think they’re not meant to be, they’re so fucking awkward they always have been!...what about you?” Asked Richie as Marcus

shrugged his shoulders.

"Same I just don't think they're meant to be...I know someone better suited to her" he muttered at the last part as then he thought about Ethan again. He thought about the way he held her close at the movie theatre, the drawing and how heartbroken he sounded back in the bathroom and even though Bella had basically broke his heart he still said he'd always look out for her. It's a shame because now that he thinks about it they'd be really cute together.

"What who?" Richie's eyes widened, eyes looking even bigger because of his glasses.

"It's not for me to say"

"Oh come on! I don't like them together, you don't like them together so maybe...we could find a way to split them? And then you can set her up with the other guy?" Suggested Richie, a little mischievous smirk at the last part. He couldn't do that to Bella, if she's happy then he needs to accept that she's happy, she's had a thing for Eddie for as long as he has known her and now she's finally with him so maybe he should just accept it.

"I...I can't do that"

"-why not?! Like you said they just don't match!" Responded Richie as he looked back at them.

"But they're happy though right?" He said as they both looked back at the table, watching as Eddie leaned forward and kissed Bella's cheek, the smile on her face as he did.

"We can't do that to them, maybe we just need to accept that they're happy" Said Marcus as he watched what looked almost like heartbreak on Richie's face as he looked at the couple.

He sighed "you're right, if Ed's is happy then I need to be happy" he muttered, Marcus sadly smiled back at him.

He could be wrong but maybe Marcus is right about Richie.

.....

When he found out Bella was leaving Derry he debated if to climb into one of her suitcases and go with her. He's rather spend he rest of his life with Bells than rot here in Derry, especially after everything that happened...that night.

He almost cried as he watched Bella pass her suitcase to her dad to put in the car. He watched as she said her goodbyes to Eddie before making her way over to him “gonna miss me Mucus?” She asked with a smirk.

“Of course Bells” he said as he pulled her into a hug.

“We’ll always be best friends” he whispered in her ear before she pulled away. Bella gave him a sad smile and he could see the tears beginning to form in her eyes “I’ll miss you” she whispered, okay now Marcus was pretty sure he was tearing up.

She gave a sad smile before making her way to the car to climb in. He made his way over to Eddie who looked close to tearing up too, poor guy had basically been dumped by his first girlfriend. He sighed before he slung his arm over Eddie’s shoulders.

When the car was about to drive away he noticed Bella in the window look in a different direction as she waved at someone. He turned to look to see Ethan Davis standing far away, waving to her. Marcus felt his heart go heavy at the sight...she should have been with Ethan.

It was not long after when Marcus’ mom had gotten a job offer out of Derry so it meant they were packing their bags and leaving too and Marcus couldn’t be more relieved. He hated this place and he couldn’t wait to start fresh.

The only problem was while everyone else forgot about what happened that summer, in a way Marcus did not forget like everyone else. He was haunted at night by vicious, terrifying nightmares that felt more like memories. They continued on into his twenties and he would wake up crying because they haunted him, he was so terrified and confused because he felt like he had lived that moment but he couldn’t remember, he tried to remember god he tried but nothing. His body was painted with scars that made him cry because he couldn’t remember how he got them, he couldn’t remember why he had so many scars.

He did the only thing he could do to try and forget or even help him ignore the nightmares for a while...he turned to the bottle.

5. 27 Years Later

Summary for the Chapter:

27 years later the group have grown up and now they are all being pulled back to Derry.

27 Years Later

"I don't want to have to warn you again Mrs Flowers but you need to take your medication to avoid your symptoms flaring up, I'm sure you'd rather not be back here" Said Bella as she removed her surgical gloves and collected her things together.

"I told her it was best she took them but did she listen? no!" Exclaimed Mr Flowers

"Oh Shut up Harold" she argued back as Bella watched the elderly couple argue, it was amusing to watch. She seems to get elderly patients on a daily basis with their partners and she often wonders if that will ever be her? Will she find someone to love and grow old with?

"My husband is a pain in my ass" said Mrs Flowers causing Bella to raise her eyebrows with surprise and her husband to scoff and shake his head. Seems she's all love there.

"What about you dear? You have a husband?" She asked which took her by surprise, no she was very much single, some reason she struggled to hold down relationships with guys. In a way she always felt like they just weren't right for her and she'd end up breaking it off...she hopes the right one is out there somewhere.

"Who me? Oh no! no I'm very much single" she responded as the elderly woman nodded her head.

"Ah something tells me you'll be meeting Mr right very soon" she said with a smirk as she shuffled back to her comfort in the bed.

"She says that to every single woman-"

"-oh shut up Harold I'm always right about these things!" She snapped back.

"I'm telling you dear, any day now!" She said as she pointed at her causing Bella to chuckle.

“Well I appreciate you thinking about me Mrs Flowers, I’ll keep that in mind” she said as she walked over to the end of the bed to fill out her information on the clipboard before slipping it back into the pouch attached to the bed.

“I have to go and see some other patients but if you need anything do not hesitate to call me or another nurse over” she said softly before Harold gave her a nod as she opened the curtain to leave before closing it again.

She felt exhausted, working at the hospital really brings it out of her. It’s a job she absolutely loves, she’s always liked the idea of helping others even if you do come across some assholes or difficult people in the line of work.

As it got towards the end of her shift she headed to the staff room. It was empty she began to collect her things in the staff room, it was empty as others had left or no one was on break yet.

The tv was on as she got her things together, but something on the small tv in the corner caught her eye. As she continued to watch on the screen there was something about a brutal attack in Derry, two men found dead it was described as an animalistic attack. Something about it made her continue to stare at the screen, her eyes felt locked and she couldn’t look away. She could feel her heart pounding and suddenly she felt like her hands were trembling.

Once she moved her eyes away from the tv screen the place began to cross her mind. Derry? why does that place sound so familiar to her? She quickly grabbed her things and signed out before leaving the hospital and rushing to make her way to her car.

As she climbed in she sat there for a while, hands were still trembling as they gripped the stirring wheel. She couldn’t explain it but something was telling her to go to Derry. She closed her eyes to give herself time to breathe and think and the second she did she saw a flash of something, like an imagine, it was too quick to see but it was like a flash of Red and orange...like it was something or someone standing there. She gasped as she opened her eyes again, jumping back a little in her seat. She didn’t know why but she needed to go to Derry.

She drove to the radio station as she promised she'd give her little sister a visit at her work, Molly has been wanting to show Bella the studio for a while but she was always caught up in work all the time. She still had time before her show ends for the night and they close up.

She arrived at the radio station, identifying who she was to security before they let her up to where her sister was currently wrapping up the show. The building was big and modern so Bella must admit she's jealous that her sister is working in such a fancy looking place, no wonder she's been wanted to show her around as she clearly wants to show off.

"Well that's all for tonight, thank you to all the lovely people who listened in! I'm Molly Morgan and you've been listening to Molly's hour, goodnight!" She exclaimed before pressing the button for the music and removing her headphones. Bella watched Molly's eyes light up as she caught sight of her on the other side, quickly rushing out the room to greet her sister.

"You're here!" She exclaimed as she pulled Bella into a tight hug, almost wheezing at the feel of her sister's tight arms wrapped around her "um yeah I had some time" she almost wheezed before Molly pulled away.

"So I thought I'd pay a little visit" she finished before giving her sister a smile.

"So? What do you think?" Said Molly with a smirk as she leaned against one of the tables behind her, crossing her arms.

"Very nice place" said Bella as she looked around.

"That's all you have to say? Oh come on please tell me you're jealous! I need to hear my big sister is jealous that I'm working in a big ass fancy studio!" She said as she got up, hands clapped together as she walked over to Bella.

Bella rolled her eyes "Okay Molly I'm so jealous! I'm so jealous of your fancy building and your fancy studio" exaggerates Bella as Molly grinned at her.

"Oh yeah guess who just cancelled on me?! Fucking Richie Tozier! He called this morning saying he's gotta be somewhere and can't make the interview! Like I'm so pissed! I thought I was finally gonna meet

THE Richie Tozier!” Ranted Molly as she threw her hands up in the air. Bella sighed as she placed both of her hands on each of her sister’s shoulders “look I’m sure he’ll reschedule when he can” she said as Molly sighed “he better” she muttered.

Derry came up in her mind again, this weird feeling telling her to go there and still she couldn’t think of the reason why. “What’s wrong” said Molly as she noticed a strange look in Bella’s eyes.

“Hey listen um....I’m going away for a few days” she started as she moved her hands off her sister’s shoulders.

“Since when?”

“It’s kind of a last minute thing” she explained as Molly narrowed her eyebrows together.

“Where you going?”

“Derry?”

“What the fuck is in Derry?”

“I just have to go”

“Is it a guy?”

“What?!”

“Is there a guy in Derry?”

“What no!” She said as Molly shrugged her shoulders.

“Yeah seems about right, you can’t seem to keep a guy” she responded causing Bella’s eyes to widen, wow little uncalled for Molly Morgan.

“I’m just saying! They never last very long but anyway never mind that! Why are you going to Derry?!” She said as she waved her hand a little to bring it back to the subject.

“I just...I just have to go” Molly started to look concerned, something wasn’t right, why was she going to Derry? And whatever reason her sister was looking uneasy, she began to feel frustrated as she wasn’t getting an answer.

“Why won’t you tell me why you’re going to Derry?...what are you hiding Bella?” If Bella was honest she couldn’t give Molly an answer even if she wanted to because the truth is she didn’t know herself.

She looked at Molly with an apologetic look “I just have to go, it will only be a few days and then I’ll be back” she said before she pulled her sister in for a hug “I’ll see you in a few days” she said before pressing a quick kiss to her sister’s cheek and leaving.

Molly felt really uneasy as she watched her sister leave. She was hiding something, she didn't know what but whatever it was it didn't sound good and it left her with a really sickly, uneasy feeling in her stomach. She continued to look at where her sister was standing before, her hand now reaching for the phone in her pocket.

As she pulled it out her thumb hesitantly hovered over the keypad, debating if to dial for a cab. Something about Bella was not sitting right with her and she needed to find out what it was, she dialled the number before bringing the phone to her ear.

"Hello? Could I have a cab take me to Derry please?"

.....

It was a bit of a dull day today, Ethan thought as he watched his class on the playground through the classroom window.

Ethan stayed in the classroom most lunch breaks, in a way he feels out of place in the staff room. He watches as all the other teachers talk and make plans with each other while Ethan is left out of them, like the brush him off like he doesn't exist, the worst feeling about it was that he had gotten used to it. All his childhood seems like a blur but he feels like he had been feeling like this all his life...lonely and just a shadow.

Being in the classroom gives him time to catch up on marking work or even silently drawing some things in his notebook. He would draw random things, at the moment he had been drawing colourful flowers on his most recent page. It's always been his little thing to draw, although he can't really remember his childhood he was pretty sure that he has always drawn, it was just his little thing. He had hold of a blue pencil, gently gliding it across the paper as he added more detail to the petals of the flower.

As he was scribbling down on the paper his classroom door opened. There stood two girls from his class, Abi and Daisy. Abi stood at the door, crying and sniffing with her knees scraped while Daisy held onto her to give Abi support.

"Oh no Abi what's happened!" Exclaimed Ethan softly, turning around to face them as they both came over to his desk.

"She fell over Mr Ethan" said Daisy as Abi began to rub her eyes from

the tears.

“Oh sweetheart, come and sit in Mr Ethan’s big chair and I’ll get the first aid box” he said as he got out the chair and Daisy helped Abi to climb up onto it. It was always an honour to sit in Mr Ethan’s big chair, the children always liked the big chair.

Daisy stayed at Abi’s side, rubbing her shoulder as Ethan grabbed the first aid box from the back of the classroom. As he came back over he opened up the box and put on some rubber gloves before kneeling in front of her to take a look at the scrapes on her knees.

“Does she need surgery Mr Ethan?” Asked Daisy causing Abi’s eyes to go wide.

“Nah! She’ll be just fine, won’t you Abi?” He said before giving Abi a soft smile as she nodded her head.

He reached for the antiseptic wipes before taking it out the packet. “This might sting a little” he said before he gently cleaned her knees up.

“Daisy could you pass me the bin sweetheart?” He asked, continuing to clean her knees as Daisy brought the bin over so that he could throw the now dirty wipes in.

“Okay that’s the hard part done! Does your mommy or daddy put band aids on you?” He Asked as he looked up at her, Abi nodded in response as he looked in the box to see what he had.

“Okay there’s two choices! I have hello kitty or Spiderman, which one?” He asked as Abi had a little think about what she wanted.

“Um...could I have a Spiderman one on this knee and a hello kitty one on the other knee?” She asked as Ethan chuckled.

“Okay, one of each it is” He said as he reached to grab for the band aids.

Sitting at Mr Ethan’s table, Abi was able to get a look at his drawings “you’ve been drawing again Mr Ethan?” Asked Abi as Daisy moved to get a closer look at his notebook.

“So pretty!” Exclaimed Daisy as she looked at the flowers on the paper. The children always loved Ethan’s drawings, sometimes they would ask if he could draw them a picture, that always goes down well.

Ethan smiled as he stood back up and grabbed his notebook, ripping the page out of the book before splitting the paper in half so there

was a flower on each side seeing as he drew more than one on the paper. The girls had a look of excitement on their faces as he gave both girls a drawing. "Since you've been so brave Abi and you've been a good friend helping her out Daisy" he said before giving them a wink and the girls smiled, holding the drawings as they looked at them.

That's when the bell went for end of lunch and Abi climbed off the big chair to go over to her own and Daisy followed. One by one all the children came into the classroom as Ethan greeted them all with smiles.

"Good afternoon everyone!"

"Good Afternoon Mr Ethan!" The children called out in response once the class had finally sat down at their desks.

"Did you all have a good lunch!"

"Yeah!" They all said while nodding their heads.

"Good!" Exclaimed Ethan before he opened the classroom closet and began to get the supplies "now this afternoon we're going to be doing my favourite subject, Art!"

He had let the children get on with their art to themselves as Ethan sketched in his own book. He didn't think about what he was drawing he just let his mind take over. He used Red's and oranges as he sketched on the paper but as he stopped to look at what he drew he felt like his guts were in his mouth. He drew a clown...an awfully familiar clown, it had bright orange hair and a big toothy grin while holding a red balloon and something about it made him feel a cold shiver down him. He felt a sweat building up as he continued to look at the drawing right in front of him before he closed the book, he didn't want to look at it. Maybe it was best he spent the rest of the lesson walking around the classroom to view the children's art.

Ethan lay in bed awake that night as he continued to think about the clown he drew, something wasn't sitting right with him and he couldn't explain it. He just felt like something was wrong and everything felt strange.

He lay awake most nights if he was honest, thinking about how he wishes his life was like, don't get him wrong he loves his job but he just feels so...lonely. No one looks his way and something tells him he doesn't want them too anyway because for twenty seven years he

feels like he's been missing someone, missing someone he loved but he doesn't know who.

He jumped a little as he heard his phone ring, knocking him out of his thoughts. He sat up in bed to see it was a withheld number as he looked at the caller ID.

"Hello?"

"Hello is this Ethan Davis?"

"Um yes speaking"

"Hello this is Paul from the Derry retirement home, we're calling about your father Steven Davis, you're the only family member we could get hold of" his father? He doesn't remember much about his father but he was pretty sure that they did not have a good relationship.

"Sorry um, what about my father?"

"Mr Davis we're very sorry to tell you but your father is very sick...seems like it will be any day now and he's requested to see you" he explained over the phone, his father was dying? He still couldn't get his head around the situation.

"Right um...thank you for letting me know"

"Looking forward to seeing you Ethan, I've missed you" just as Ethan was about to question what the hell he meant the phone line went dead. That was weird...he missed him? He's never met this man before? Has he? Something about it "I've missed you" sounded really dark and sinister and it was making him feel uneasy.

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"Hate to break it to ya but your wife's cheating" said Seb as he threw the pictures on the desk for his client. He watched as his client grabbed the pictures, looking through them of his wife in various positions with another man. He watched as the client clenched his fist around the pictures before he huffed.

"Sorry but now you know" Muttered Seb as he spun a little in his chair.

"Fuck you!" Spat the man.

"Woah I didn't sleep with your wife what are you saying fuck you to me for?" He responded as he held his hands up in surrender.

"Because this is all a big joke to you isn't it? I've basically lost my wife and now you want money!"

“Listen! I couldn’t give a shit who you, your wife or Jerry next door was fucking! I’m just doing my job, you asked me to investigate your wife, I did and that’s what I found so you can have your little bitch fit but don’t take it out on me!” Exclaimed Seb which seemed to anger the guy more. He grabbed his phone as he noticed the client’s fist tightening, why can’t people accept that their wife is cheating and go and confront them instead of getting aggressive with him?

“Better watch your anger pal or I’ll dial some special little numbers that bring the police here or I’ll get Jerry from next door I’m telling ya, you don’t want to mess with that guy” he said with a shit eating smirk as he held his phone in his hands. The client looked at the phone before back at him as Seb raised his eyebrows.

The client huffed before taking money out of his pocket and throwing it on the desk “don’t you want the pictures? They’re no use to me, I mean....not gonna lie they both look pretty hot” he admits he just said that to piss off the guy, but he wasn’t wrong about the people in the pictures. The man huffed again before he left the apartment, slamming the door behind him.

He sighed as he threw himself back into the chair, that was a tough one. Why do people feel the need to try and shoot the messenger that they’ve literally paid for to deliver the message? He shuffled the papers and shoved them into a messy pile on the desk before he sat in silence.

He’s so good at finding out shit about others but he can’t find out shit about himself apparently. His whole childhood feels like this empty hole, he can’t remember anything but he feels it...he feels this pain that he could only describe as grief but he can’t understand why. He always feels this anxious feeling inside himself and for some fucking reason he hates Red balloons, he doesn’t want to be near one of those fuckers and he couldn’t explain why.

Speaking of red balloons, fucking Jerry from next door was knocking on his door while holding one of those fuckers.

“Oh woah, woah, woah you’re not coming in here with that thing!” Called out Seb as Jerry opened his door.

“But it came with the letter for you-“

“-I don’t give a fuck! Get that fucking thing out of here!” He called

out, pointing at the door as Jerry opened his own door to shove the balloon in while shaking his head.

"Fucking red balloons" he muttered to himself as Jerry entered the apartment now balloon-less.

Jerry threw the letter onto the table before sitting down as Seb picked up the letter.

"So who was the guy that just left your apartment? Boyfriend?" Asked Jerry causing Seb to laugh.

"Oh definitely not, too rough for my taste...nah I exposed his wife, she was cheating on him and he just couldn't take the heat" he explained as he began to open the letter.

"Maybe it's because you behave like such a little shit to your clients" said Jerry.

"Okay dad!" Responded Seb as he rolled his eyes and began to read the letter.

It was a handwritten letter about someone in Derry who was interested in hiring him for a job.

"Apparently someone in Derry wants to hire me" he said as Jerry raised his eyebrows "how much are they paying?" He Asked.

"He's not said...but a job is a job, hopefully I'll get big bucks for this one" he muttered as he read over the letter.

"Some guy named Vic Criss apparently" why did that name sound so familiar? Whoever it was, was now leaving an uneasy feeling in the pit of his stomach.

"Well I'll leave you too it, if you find out anything interesting let me know" Said Jerry as he got up out the seat and went to leave, Jerry always loved a good gossip and Seb was his best source.

"Will do Jer!"

"Don't call me that!" He snapped back as he left.

Seb threw the letter on the desk as he tried to remember. Vic Criss...Vic Criss....why did it sound so familiar to him? Well there was only one way to find out, he's going to Derry.

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Hands clawing at him, the sharp sting of them dragging at his skin. The warm feeling of blood dripping down his body from the claws

digging in. The darkness overtaking the room as he feels like he's being pulled down. He tries to scream and cry out for help but no one listens, he even cries out for his mom but the shadow mimics him which makes him sob harder.

That's when something went to jump and grab at him, he only saw it for a flicker of a second, before he threw himself forward. Marcus panted and gasped for air as he looked at his surroundings...he was in his room. He gasped and groaned as he placed his hands over his face and feeling the wetness of his cheeks. The same fucking dream for twenty seven years.

He wiped his eyes as he took a deep breath, god he could use a drink. He can't....fifteen years he's been sober for, he can't break that now, maybe his other distraction will help. He looked over at his acoustic guitar in the corner of the bedroom as he looked at the nightlight plugged in next to it. The nightlight was a yellow crescent moon with white clouds below it, something about it meant a lot to him but he couldn't remember what. Something about it kept him safe and made him feel like home even if he couldn't explain the reason for it. He smiled at it, whatever the reason was for the nightlight he hopes it's a happy memory.

He climbed out of bed and with trembling hands grabbed for his guitar before sitting back on the bed. He breathed in before slowly breathing out and setting his fingers in place. He began to softly strum along on his guitar, strumming anything that came to mind as he tried to calm himself down. For twenty seven years he has suffered with these nightmares, these visions. They frustrate and anger him because they feel so real, almost like he has lived in it and he tries so hard to remove what it is. He turned to music as a distraction, he's gotten around and is known in some places for his music, he's not hugely famous but he has some sort of fame to his name.

Marcus spent some time strumming his guitar and softly singing to himself, the urge to drink was now gone but the sickening, uneasy feeling was still there. He stopped what he was doing on the guitar and turned on the small radio at his bedside, maybe listening to the radio would help distract him.

"News just in two bodies have been found in what could only be

described as an animalistic attack. Their bodies were found up washed up in Derry near the carnival taken place tonight” Marcus began to zone out of the rest of the news report as all these thoughts began to flood through his head. Why was Derry so familiar to him? And why did the place start to bring him amplified fear and dread?

He pushed his guitar aside as he headed to the bathroom to splash his face with cold water. It didn't help the feeling of dread inside him. As he closed his eyes again to splash more cold water on his face there he saw it...a clown, it was a clown. The sight of it caused him to snap his eyes open and throw himself back away from the mirror. He clutched his bathroom door as he gasped and panted. Something happened to him in Derry, he doesn't know what but something happened. He's been living it for twenty seven years and he's never going to find out the truth unless he goes there.

He headed back into his bedroom, grabbing a bag and began to pack some things together. He can't continue to live like this, he needs to find out the truth, fill in the blank spaces of his life.

6. Chapter Six - Welcome Back Pt 1

Summary for the Chapter:

Bella and Ethan return to Derry.

Possible trigger warning - Ethan's part contains themes of emotional abuse/neglect

As Bella entered Derry she felt this sudden feeling of sickness wash over her. It was all too familiar for her and now she knew. She drove slowly as she scanned her surroundings feeling all of these memories start to come back to her, she grew up here, she grew up in Derry. How could she forget where she grew up? And why was it all suddenly coming back to her?

She recognised the old buildings and the odd atmosphere it always had. she remembers the school she went to and the movie theatre. The movie theatre.....as she slowly pulled up next to it she felt this sudden rush of sickness, fear and anxiety fill her. She remembers being dragged out of a closet in the movie theatre and she was screaming and crying but she couldn't remember why, she just remembers feeling so scared.

She also remembers how whoever grabbed her made her feel safe and protected but she couldn't remember faces or names she just remembers him saying that she was okay and that he was here. She still couldn't picture the face but she remembers being forced to look into a pair of brown eyes, something about his eyes were so comforting to her the moment she looked into them.

The big black hole of her childhood always frustrated her and it's still frustrating her now that she was struggling so hard to try and remember. It was coming back to her in small bits but she still felt very much in the dark about her childhood. She sat in her car as she looked at the movie theatre, something was telling her to go in but something else was giving her this really uneasy feeling. Her thumbs tapped the stirring wheel as she debated on what to do.

She turned the engine off and climbed out of her car, it felt weird to have her feet on Derry ground after all of these years. In a way the

whole situation felt odd and unnatural but at the same time she felt like she was back at home, it was strange. Slowly she made her way towards the movie theatre before opening the doors to go in. She remembers she used to go with someone but she can't remember their name or their face but something about them she could feel had a closeness in her heart.

She looked around at the familiar surroundings of the movie theatre, a place she remembers going too many times to count and the amount of candy she'd eat with whoever this person was. She has happy memories here, apart from that one incident but she knows she's had good times at this movie theatre even if she can't remember.

"Bella" whispered a voice causing this sudden sickness to fill her entire body. The whisper sent chills down her body and she knew it was something evil approaching her. She slowly turned to look at the door at the end of the movie theatre....she remembers that door, a balloon, a red balloon she remembers following.

"Welcome home Bella" the voice now whispered causing her to swallow the lump in her throat. She felt like something was compelling her to go to that door even if her mind was screaming at her to just turn around and walk away.

She slowly made her way to the door, a dark chuckle on the other side as she held her hand out towards the door handle. She slowly turned the door knob before opening the door to darkness. When she says darkness it was towards the end of the room, like a shadow of something. Something was there waiting for her.

She remembered....she remembers the clown, the door becoming so far away no matter how fast she ran, the walls closing in and god where they closing in. She remembers not being able to breathe because she was panicking so much and the walls felt like they were suffocating her as they closed in. She remembers the ball she curled herself up in and the pretty pink dress she wore. Bella felt sick.

"It's been twenty seven years Bella" said the voice, it's eyes glowing in the darkness at the end of the room. It was the clown, it's gotta be the clown that scared her all those years. She remembers the orange

hair and the bucked teeth, she remembers it's glowing eyes.

"Why don't you come in" suggested the clown.

"Go fuck yourself" hissed Bella, the words gritting through her teeth causing the clown to chuckle.

She was terrified but she was angry too, the way that thing made her feel so scared all those years ago and now it's back, it's back trying to make her feel scared again. Is this why she's back here? Did the clown find a way to draw her back to Derry? To finish what it had started all those years ago?

"Better watch out for baby Morgan" it said causing Bella's heart to stop and eyes to widen.

"What do you mean? What the fuck do you mean?!" She yelled, it was coming after Molly? No it can't? She's back at home while the clown is here in Derry.

"Talk to me you piece of shit what do you mean?!"

That's when the clown emerged from the shadows, razor sharp teeth as it ran towards the door. It ran like it was about to rip to shreds and Bella was terrified. In a panic Bella screamed out as she slammed the door shut just as it was about to grab for her. She ran as fast as she could out of the movie theatre as she looked at her surroundings to see if the clown had followed her out.

She gasped for air as her wary eyes looked around, she probably got some funny looks in the movie theatre if anyone was around but she didn't give a shit. She stood there for a while, feeling her heart pounding and the sound of it beating in her ears.

As she felt herself beginning to calm down and she was sure the clown was gone she looked around at her surrounding. There was some sort of parade going on and there were people holding balloons....red balloons, fuck balloons.

As she looked at the commotion, she watched as she noticed someone covering their eyes as they made their way through the parade, speed walking as fast as they could away from the crowd while wary looking at the balloons. The man stood there, next to Bella as he looked back.

"Not a fan of balloons either?" Asked Bella as she turned to look at

him.

“Definitely not, especially red ones, fuck red balloons” he said in response as he pointed at the balloons. That was before the guy turned to look at Bella, looking her up and down “sorry I hope I don’t sound rude but you look a little pale, you okay?” He asked.

“Um yeah...I just....I just had a really bad trip down memory lane” she said before her eyes quickly looked back at the movie theatre before looking back at him.

She noticed how the guy looked at her, his eyes narrowing a little. If she was honest she thought he looked familiar, like she had seen his face before. She raised her eyebrows a little as the guy continued to stare “I’m sorry but you look really familiar...what’s your name?” He apologised as he realised he was staring for too long.

“Um Bella...Bella Morgan” his eyes widened a little “oh my god! We never spoke but we were in some of the same classes together in school, I’m Sebastian...Sebastian Miller” he responded a little nervously. Ah so that’s why he looked familiar! Sebastian was in some of her classes, she remembers he used to hang out with the fucking Bowers gang....and someone else after that...but she couldn’t remember who.

“I remember you, I think it was math we were in? Sorry I’ve only come back here today and all these memories are coming back” explained Bella as Sebastian’s eyes widened a little.

“Me too! Does it feel like...like your whole childhood was this emptiness....like you forgot everything?” He asked her, she could sense how uneasy he sounded, she thought there was something wrong with her but others were feeling like this too? What if the clown had dragged Sebastian here too, to come for him?

“Yeah it’s weird, being back here feels like the memories are coming back faster and faster and it feels a little overpowering...strange” she responded as she looked back at him, the look in his eyes she knew he was feeling the exact same way.

“Um...maybe we could catch up? There’s a pretty empty coffee shop down there if you wanna grab a coffee” suggested Sebastian as he pointed towards the building.

Bella looked back at the movie theatre before she sighed “you know what? I could do with a coffee...or something stronger after the shit

I've just been through"

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The moment Ethan entered Derry it was like everything became too much, all these memories he didn't know he had flashing all at once in his mind. He grew up here, he grew up in Derry, he's starting to remember it all and he remembered how miserable he was.

The taxi had pulled up outside the retirement home and Ethan had felt this lump in his throat. He was starting to remember things, he was starting to remember his dad and how cold he was towards him. He remembers how all his life his dad treated him like he didn't exist and how lonely and heartbreaking it made him feel. He was feeling that pain all over again and now he had mixed emotions, he was feeling the pain of neglect all those years ago mixed with anger from him but also possibly a hint of happiness that he actually wants to see him. He shouldn't get his hopes up, something tells him he'll be leaving with that heartbreak all over again that he's been used to feeling all his life.

He thanked the taxi driver and payed him before he stepped out the cab and stood outside the retirement home. He clenched his fist tightly as he felt anxious, taking a deep breath before unclenching as he exhaled. He could feel his heart pounding in his chest as he made his way to the entrance of the home.

Making his way to the desk to greet the person it was a man who looked around his age. If he was honest he felt like he had met him before, as he looked up at Ethan he felt like his eyes looked too familiar and he couldn't put his finger on it. "Your father is this way Ethan" said the guy behind the desk as he moved away to guide Ethan to his father's room.

Ethan paused as he looked at the guy "h-how did you know who I was?" Asked Ethan because he was now getting really creepy vibes. "Oh it's just we're not expecting any other guests today, I'm Paul the guy you spoke to last night" explained Paul as he held his hand out for Ethan to shake.

"Pleased to meet you" he responded as he accepted the handshake but it didn't get rid of the uneasy feeling in the pit of his stomach,

maybe it was because he was about to see his father after all these years.

As they let go, Paul led him towards the room and Ethan felt like his heart was beginning to pound as he got closer to the door. "I'll leave you to it" said Paul before walking away. Ethan's hand trembled as he reached for the door handle before slowly opening the door.

The first thing he saw was his father now old and looking worn out in bed, an IV attached to his hand as Ethan stepped in. "Hello?" Groaned his father as he looked up, Ethan stood by the door, keeping his distance.

"Hello Steven" he said as he looked at him, he remembers his last moments with his father. He remembers telling him that he was done and that he'd never see him again, look how that turned out.

Steven narrowed his eyes together as he got a better look at him "Ethan?" He questioned and Ethan felt his own pulse skip.

"E-Ethan?...come closer, let me look at you" he said as he weakly held his hand out for Ethan. Ethan hesitantly stepped closer but didn't accept his hand. He still felt angry and upset with his father after all these years, he felt like he should be the better person but years of emotional pain and just wanting his dad to notice him he couldn't push that pain away.

"You've grown into such a handsome man" he said as Ethan scoffed.

"You gonna cut to the chase?" Started Ethan as he crossed his arms and Steven looked at him confused.

"You didn't give a shit about me my whole life so what's changed? Why am I here?" He said as Steven swallowed.

"I'm dying Ethan...I just wanted to know how my son was doing" something about this angered Ethan, like all this bottled rage he was holding onto was now being released and it was turning ugly. Was his father's guilty conscience finally catching up with him? "I'm doing great" he started as he leaned forward, face closer to his father and clutched the bars on his bed.

"I have a good home, a great job...like I told you all those years ago, I've made something of myself when you didn't give a shit while you..." He said as he looked his father up and down "spent your life

rotting here” a smirk formed on Ethan’s face.

“Ethan don’t be like that”

“Like what? Cold? Mean? Bitter? Distant? Because that’s what you where, you where all those things growing up....look how the tables of turned” he almost spat, his words feeling like venom as they rolled off his tongue, tears were prickling his eyes and threatening to leave as his hands clenched on the bed handle, knuckles turning white at how hard he was clenching.

As Steven looked up at him with no words Ethan scoffed “got nothing to say?” That’s when the look in Steven’s eyes changed, something about the look in his eyes made his blood run cold.

“I was going to say don’t be so pathetic” spat his dad before grabbing Ethan’s wrist.

“You were too much of a coward to tell me all those things when I was alive” he continued as Ethan furrowed his eyebrows together with confusion, what was he talking about.

He hand on Ethan’s wrist grew incredibly cold “can you feel it? I’ve been dead for two years boy” he said as Ethan felt panic rise in him. He tried to move back but his dad had a tight grip on his wrist.

His dad rose from to bed, following Ethan who was now panicking and trying to pull away. The IV drip now dragging up his dad’s hand and up his arm, the needle dragging at his skin which was enough to make Ethan want to gag.

“You’ve always been such a pathetic little boy and you still are” hissed his father as his face grew closer to Ethan’s. His eyes were now looking rotted and Ethan felt a whimper in his throat as he panicked, this is not real, this is a nightmare.

In a panic he finally broke away, this was not real? He ran to the door but his “dad” followed him, his cold now rotting body was now pressed against him as Ethan tried to grab for the door handle “YOU’RE NOT REAL! YOU’RE NOT REAL!” He yelled out in fear as he turned to face the rotted corpse of his father. He had never felt so terrified in his whole life, he had never heard his own voice sound so scared or has he felt this fear before?

“You won’t get far Ethan! You’ll die a nobody here!” Chuckled his father as Ethan’s hand grabbed for the door handle and he threw

himself out the room, slamming the door behind him. He panted and whimpered, hands on the door to stop whatever that was on the other side from following him as he tried to collect himself before going to confront Paul on what the fuck that was.

As he got to the main entrance he noticed how awfully abandoned it was. Looking he saw Paul sitting back in a chair, looking ahead at the fire place. "I've missed you Ethan, how long has it been? Twenty seven years?" He asked and Ethan felt like his body was trembling.

Paul smirked "what? Don't recognise me?" He said as he turned to look at Ethan, that's when he flashed a toothy grin, his front teeth now looking bucked causing Ethan's words to feel trapped in his throat. The clown...he remembers...the clown that summer. He remembers running away terrified all of those years as it tried to come for him, all the insults it said him his father's voice. The clown set up a trap and he fell for it, it's brought him back to Derry to kill him, finish off what he tried to do all of those years ago.

'Paul' laughed as he leaned back in the chair "well now it's time to float Ethan" It said as Ethan gasped. "No!" He called out as he ran to the door, opening it and running as fast as he could out of the retirement home.

He kept looking at the retirement home as he ran out the door and because he wasn't looking where he was going he ended up slamming into someone. "Ow fuck!" She groaned, Ethan looked to see he had slammed into a blonde girl, younger than him now getting up off the floor.

"I-I'm really sorry" stuttered Ethan as he helped her up, now feeling guilt for hurdling into this random girl.

"Yeah you should be...Hey you okay?" Her tone quickly changed as she most likely noticed how uneasy he probably looked and looked back at the retirement home, his heart was still pounding in his chest. "Um yeah just....stay away from there" he muttered as he pointed at the retirement home. The girl raised her eyebrow before giving a little nod "okaaayy" she said slowly as she looked at the retirement home.

"I mean some old people are pretty scary I don't blame you" she

joked as she looked back.

“Actually while I’m speaking to something maybe you could help me? I’m looking for my sister, she’s probably around your age, a little smaller than you, brown hair and a pretty sharp jawline” she explained as Ethan raised his eyebrows with amusement.

“I can’t say I have, I’ve only just arrived here” he responded.

“Same, maybe if I give you her name it could help? her names Isabella but she prefers Bella, Bella Morgan?”

Bella Morgan,

Bella Morgan,

The name started coming back to him, her big brown eyes, her soft hair, the freckles across her nose, her sweet smile. Bella Morgan, that’s why he felt this feeling all those years...this feeling of love, the love he felt for Bella Morgan, god how could he forget her? But now she was here? Here in Derry?

“Sorry did you say Bella Morgan?”

“Yeah that’s my sister, you know her?” She asked as Ethan softly smiled.

“I’ve known her since we were kids, once she moved out of Derry I never saw her again...sorry this is just a lot to take in right now um, wow, she’s here?!” He was probably doing a terrible job at keeping his excitement in but he couldn’t believe it! Bella Morgan was in Derry after all of these years! How could he forget her?! How could he forget the girl he’d do anything for?

“Yeah I kind of followed her down here, maybe if you’re not busy you could help me? I guess this could be some sort of reunion” she suggested.

“Yeah I’ll help you look...sorry I didn’t catch your name?”

“Molly” she said as she held her hand out for him to shake.

“Ethan” he said as he took her hand.

“Nice to meet you” She said as they pulled away from the handshake and began to walk.

Now why was Molly Morgan familiar? Wait a minute...

“Are you Molly Morgan on the radio?”

“Yep that’s me! Want a picture?”

7. Chapter Seven - Welcome Back Pt. 2

Summary for the Chapter:

The group now reunite and talk

When Seb entered Derry all of these memories started to come back to him. He grew up here, and he remembers he had a friend...Ethan? Ethan...something? He couldn't remember his last name but he remembers it's Ethan. A lot of it was still of a blur but he remembers the only friend he had, he remembers how sweet and kind he was and how he accepted him for his sexuality...he was the reason he's so comfortable with who he is now.

Arriving in Derry felt a little overwhelming and daunting especially when the first thing he sees is a parade going on filled with fucking balloons, red ones to be precise. He still wonders why Red balloons give him so much anxiety...is it something to do with this place? He was already feeling this worry and dread and he couldn't even explain why.

He tried to make his way through the crowd at the parade which was a little bit of a challenge, especially while trying to avoid eye contact at those fucking balloons or even being near them. It took a bit of time as he tried to politely get past people before he was finally out of the big crowd of people. He stood back as he stared at the crowd of people, feeling relief to get out of it.

"Not a fan of balloons either?" Asked a woman next to him as she turned to look in his direction.

"Definitely not, especially red ones, fuck red balloons" he said in response as he pointed at the balloons. Turning to look at the woman next to him he noticed how sickly and pale she looked, almost like she had seen a ghost.

"sorry I hope I don't sound rude but you look a little pale, you okay?" He asked.

"Um yeah...I just....I just had a really bad trip down memory lane" she said before her eyes quickly looked at the movie theatre they were currently standing next to before she turned to look back at

him. Now that Seb really looks at her, he noticed how familiar she looked, like he had seen her before but he couldn't put his finger on who she was.

"I'm sorry but you look really familiar...what's your name?" He apologised as he realised he was staring for too long and probably creeping her out.

"Um Bella...Bella Morgan" the moment he heard the name leave her lips he remembered. She was in his class right? They never spoke from what he could remember, so why does the name stand out so much? As the memories slowly came back to him that's when he remembered...Ethan, god that boy was head over heels for her, always looking at her like she was an angel sent from the heavens above, in a way how love sick he was for her made him want to throw up.

His eyes widened a little "oh my god! We never spoke but we were in some of the same classes together in school, I'm Sebastian...Sebastian Miller" he responded a little nervously and a smile came to Bella's face.

"I remember you, I think it was math we were in? Sorry I've only come back here today and all these memories are coming back" explained Bella as Sebastian's eyes widened a little. She had just arrived here too? Bit of a strange coincidence that they have both arrived in Derry?

"Me too! Does it feel like...like your whole childhood was this emptiness....like you forgot everything?" He asked her.

"Yeah it's weird, being back here feels like the memories are coming back faster and faster and it feels a little overpowering...strange" she responded as she looked back at him. She knew exactly how he was feeling.

"Um...maybe we could catch up? There's a pretty empty coffee shop down there if you wanna grab a coffee" suggested Sebastian as he pointed towards the building.

Bella looked back at the movie theatre before she sighed "you know what? I could do with a coffee...or something stronger after the shit I've just been through".

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Like he said, it was pretty quiet when they entered the coffee shop, basically abandoned. Maybe because of the excitement of the parade that everyone was out there instead of sitting indoors. Bella and Seb both sat at a table at the back of the coffee shop, ordering their drinks as they looked through the window.

"Feels strange being back right?" Started Bella as she kept her eyes on the window.

"Yeah it almost feels weird....like this place is separated from the rest of the world" Responded Seb as his eyes joined the window.

Bella nervously swallowed "it's like....I completely forgot about my childhood...all I remember is feeling scared..." she muttered and Seb began to feel it too, this fear but he can't remember why he was feeling so scared back then and it was causing him to feel uneasy now.

"Anyway! Never mind this place what have you been up to?" Asked Bella as she quickly changed the subject, turning back to look at Seb.

"Oh I've um...I've got my own business, I'm a PI" Explained Seb as his fingers tapped the mug in his hands.

"Oh that's cool! So what? You do undercover stuff?" She asked with a smirk as she took a sip of her drink.

"I guess" shrugged Seb "mainly exposing cheaters, my last client didn't take the news very well. It's actually why I'm here! I received a letter from someone asking for my help" explained Seb and Bella's eyes widened a little.

"Are you sure?"

Seb furrowed his eyebrows together "what do you mean?" He questioned.

"It's just...don't you find it strange that we're back here? To me it felt like I was drawn here...what if were not the only ones back?" Said Bella as her hands almost clutched her cup, almost like she was trying to stop them from shaking.

"Is there something you're not telling me? Because when I saw you, you look really pale and kept looking back at the movie theatre...did something happen?" He asked as Bella looked up at him again, her brown eyes almost widened at his question.

"It's....it's hard to explain...I just remember last time I told someone about this they didn't believe me..." she started, she remembers

telling someone about the theatre incident and them laughing at her thinking it was a joke....like anyone would with something like this.

“Bella” started Seb as he leaned forward and placed his hand over her shaking ones.

“I don’t remember much at the moment but I remember feeling terrified about something but I can’t remember what...maybe whatever it is you saw was the same thing?” Bella’s wide eyes looked up at him as she nervously swallowed “I s-“

Next minute Bella’s phone was ringing, as she looked at the caller ID she saw it was her sister.

“Sorry...I’ve gotta take this” she said as she moved her hands away and answered the phone.

“Finally you answer! This place is a bitch to get signal!” Exclaimed Molly the second Bella answered the phone.

“W-where are you?”

“Okay don’t be mad...but I kind of followed you...I’m in Derry” Bella felt like her heart stopped the second she heard those words.

‘Baby Morgan is next’ echoed through her head and she started to panic.

“No no no no no you can’t be here!” She said as her voice rose with panic.

“Well I’m here now, Bella what’s going on? you’re scaring me” she said, her voice sounding concerned.

“Where are you?”

“There’s some sort of parade going on” she explained and Bella could hear all the commotion on Molly’s side of the phone.

“Are you near a cafe?”

“Yeah, oh I see you!” She said before she hung up the phone.

Bella put her phone down and buried her face with her hands.

“You okay?” Asked Seb

“My sister is here, she can’t be here, she’s in danger” Muttered Bella with panic in her voice.

“What do you mean? Is this to do with what you saw?”

That’s when the dell rang as someone came through the door. Molly quickly came walking over to the back of the room towards Bella “you going to tell me what’s going on? Or do you still not have an answer” she said, she had a look of anger and annoyance on her face

as she looked at her sister.

"It's hard to explain, I couldn't tell you back at home because I didn't know why I had to be back here but now I've started to remember things, Molly you can't be here!"

Seb got up out of his seat as he gave the sisters space to argue with each other and that's when he noticed someone by the door a guy. They both looked at each other as they scanned each other's face. Suddenly it started to become clear as to why his face looked so familiar...Ethan?

"Ethan?"

"Seb?" They both asked as their eyes widened and smiles began to form in their faces. His childhood friend...well his only friend but his best friend. Suddenly they were walking faster up to each other before they welcomed each other in a tight embrace "oh my god" breathed Seb as he clutched onto Ethan tightly. His best friend was here, oh my god his best friend.

As they pulled away they really looked at each other's faces. Still the same faces but now older "holy shit Ethan?!"

"It's been a while right?" He said with a smile before Seb pulled him into another hug.

"I can't believe I couldn't remember you...but the second I saw you I—" muttered Ethan as they pulled away again.

"You forgot too?" Asked Seb as Ethan gave a sad smile.

"I'm so sorry" as Seb shook his head.

"It's okay...oh speaking of...do you remember a certain someone? because look who I bumped into" Asked Seb with raised eyebrows as he turned towards the direction of the girls arguing with each other.

Bella? Oh wow....she's even more beautiful than Ethan remembers. Her face older but aged so gracefully, her big brown eyes and her long lashes, her long brown hair. Ethan felt like he couldn't speak, his heart was pounding in his chest and all these feelings he felt for her all those years ago were now coming back but now it felt like these feelings were amplified, it almost made him feel weak and sick. God he never had just a crush on her did he? He was in love with her...still is.

"Look we need to all sit down and talk about whatever this is because you're not talking a lot of sense...I also came in with someone, he says he knows you?" Sighed Molly as Bella looked confused.

"Who?"

"He said his name is Ethan?" Ethan? Ethan? As she looked over her eyes locked with those familiar brown eyes from all those years ago, the eyes of the boy who told her that she is safe and that he'll protect her all those years ago. Ethan was the boy at the movie theatre "Ethan" she breathed.

Ethan watched as her mouth formed 'Ethan' too quiet for him to hear but he knows she said his name. She remembers him? She actually remembers him? Even though he was always that boy in the shadows? He nervously swallowed as Seb stepped aside as Bella walked over to him.

As she got closer to him he was able to get a better look at her face, her soft, big brown eyes that looked like honey in the sunlight, the adorable small freckles across her nose, her pink cheeks and her soft smile. "H-hi" whispered Ethan with a soft smile.

"Hey" She Responded softly as she pulled him into a hug. Her soft hair, smelling like honey as it brushed a little across his face and the sweet smell of her perfume as he wrapped his arms around her smaller frame. He could stay in this moment forever if he could, her being in his arms like he always wanted, like he wanted all of those years ago but he can't.

But he was brought back to reality as Bella began to pull away from the hug. "It's really nice to see you"

Ethan said, somehow able to find the courage to be the first one to speak.

"It's really nice to see you too" she said with the most cutest smile he had ever seen, the way her eyes lit up as she smiled even if it was only a soft smile.

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Marcus' hands clutched the stirring wheel as he now entered Derry. Could this be his answer? Could this be the answers to all of his problems? Could this place be the reason why he has been haunted with nightmares and visions for twenty seven years?

His breath felt shakey as the slowly drove through Derry. It had suddenly felt like all of these memories he had forgotten were slowly coming back to him. Derry was where he grew up, something must have happened to him in Derry...something must have happened here to make him such a fuck up.

He recognised the school he drove past and the movie theatre...Bella...Bells, his best friend. He began to remember Bells, they'd do everything together 'Bells and Mucus' was their team name. Remembering his best friend almost took away this fear and anxiety he was currently feeling right now, the thought of his best friend, she always made him feel safe.

He ended up driving up to a coffee shop, he needed a minute, he needed time to stop and process all the stuff that was slowly coming back to him. How did he forget it all? How did he forget his whole fucking childhood? That can't be fucking normal? "Fuck I need a drink" he muttered to himself...maybe he should get a coffee, probably not the best for calming nerves but he needed something.

He climbed out of his car before making his way in. He went over to the counter as he waited for the waitress behind the counter to come over. He ordered a normal coffee as she began to get to work. That's when he noticed a girl walk up to him, obviously waiting to get a drink. He knows it's rude to stare but he couldn't help it, she looked so familiar. Those eyes, the face....

The girl seemed to be annoyed as she turned to look at him "Can I help you?" She said, her tone a little harsh. That's when it clicked...he knew exactly why she looked so familiar.

"Bells?" He muttered and her eyes widened at the nickname before she began to closely look at him.

"I'm sorry?" She asked.

"Do you remember me? Mucus?" He said as he pointed at himself hoping she remembered him and that this was Bells otherwise he just embarrassingly called himself Mucus in front of a stranger, although it seems she did as her eyes widened a little more "Marcus?" She breathed and a smile formed on his face.

"Oh my god" she whispered as she pulled him into a hug, an awfully tight hug. Marcus felt like he could cry, his best friend was here, she

was here in Derry too. "It's been so long!" He exclaimed as Bella laughed before pulling away.

"Oh my god Marcus! After all of these years?!" She exclaimed. If she was honest he's not how she expected him to look, Marcus was always a posh looking kid even though he didn't behave it, with his slick back hair and stylish clothes and now he looks...casual, his hair was a little volumed and fluffed and he had a beard, he was pretty she must admit and she imagines he's probably a hit with the girls.

"W-what are you doing here?" She asked and that's when an uneasy look was on his face.

"If I'm honest...I-I don't know...it just felt like something brought me here, you?" He responded. Oh my god...what if the clown had brought them all here to finish what it had started back in that summer?

"I think you better sit down" she muttered as Marcus looked over at the table with three other people circling around it.

"W-what's going on?" He stuttered

"The two guys at the table are Ethan Davis and Sebastian Miller...they were brought here too" she explained as Marcus looked over.

"Who's the girl?"

"That's...that's my sister, she kind of followed me here" that's when Marcus' eyes lit up as he looked over at Molly.

"You have a little sister?! Now I've gotta meet her" He exclaimed as he walked over to the table to join the others, Bella following behind.

"You guys remember Marcus?" Asked Bella as they sat down.

"Ah yes, nice to see you again" Said Ethan as he brought his hand out for Marcus to shake.

"You too Ethan" he said in response as he took his hand.

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They all talked for a while, forgetting the main subject as to why they were gathered around in the first place as they all began to remember things about their childhood in Derry and Molly learning new things about Bella's friends.

"I fucking knew you'd become a doctor or nurse or some shit like that, the amount of times you'd clean me up after falling off my bike"

chuckled Marcus as he took a sip of his coffee.

“So she’s always been like this?” Smirked Molly

“Yes! The moment I hurt myself and cried like a bitch, out came Bells’ backpack with her bandaids and tissues” he said as Ethan smiled a little to himself. He remembered the time outside the store when Bella came running over to him to clean his knee...after he ran away from the clown. He remembers the adorable look of concentration on her face as she cleaned it up before putting a band aid on.

“I remember” started Ethan as they all turned to look at him “I just remember one time I fell and Bella found me outside the store and helped to clean my knee up” he explained with a little smile as he looked up at her. He saw the smile on Bella’s face as he talked about it, he’s guessing she remembers too “you were a great patient, didn’t whine or complain, not like Mucus over here” she said with a smirk as she playfully reached over to shove Marcus.

“Hey! It hurt I had every right to complain” he whined before rubbing his shoulder.

“Anyway so what has quiet little Ethan Davis been doing in his life” exclaimed Seb as he finally spoke up.

“Well I’m actually a elementary school teacher” he explained as his finger circled his cup.

“Oh wow! It makes sense you were always incredibly kind and sweet from what I remembered, I bet the kids love you” Responded Seb because it was the truth, anyone could see back then how sweet Ethan was...well the people that actually took time to get to know Ethan.

“Yeah...I guess, I mean the kids always come in with smile on their faces and they seem to like my drawings” he explained as a smile formed on Bella’s face.

“You draw?” She asked with surprise.

“Y-Yeah for as long as I can remember...I guess it’s just a little hobby of mine” he explained as a wider smile formed on her face.

“Do you think you could draw me a picture?” She asked with a little smirk which actually took Ethan by surprise causing Molly and Marcus to look at each other, was Bella flirting? Is this the guy Bella came to Derry for?

Ethan smirked back and leaned forward a little “what would you like me to draw?” He said with confidence but Seb could clearly see the pink on his cheeks, Ethan was flirting with his crush and that boy couldn’t control the flustered look on his face. Marcus and Molly looked at each other with a smirk before looking back at the kind of flirty interaction between the two.

“Anything” She said with a smile, her pearly white teeth showing and her eyes almost lighting up with excitement which almost made Ethan’s heart do flips.

“Well I’ll be sure to think of something for you” he said with a soft smile.

“I look forward to it”

As Marcus began to think the interaction almost caused some sort of memory trigger. He remembers the drawing he found under the tree of Bella, the red notebook. He also remembers Ethan in the bathroom crying in one of the cubicles after he found out she was dating Eddie Kaspbrak. It’s so obvious...the drawing was Ethan, in a way his heart felt for him..this boy was in love with her all those years ago and it seems the feelings never disappeared.

“Anyway so what does this one you call Mucus do?” Said Molly as she put a pause on the flirty interaction between this guy and her sister as she pointed at Marcus.

“Well blonde Morgan! I do music” he responded as he ruffled her hair a little causing her to scoff and fix it.

“Oh wow really? Not a career I thought you’d end up in” Exclaimed Bella.

“Yeah...it’s not something I thought I’d end up doing either if I’m honest...it just crept up on me” he explained.

“Wait a minute..what’s your full name?” Asked Molly as she looked deep in thought as if she was trying to remember something.

“Marcus Hayes” he said as her eyes lit up.

“Oh my god I love your music! You’re kind of like a little underground discovery of mine, I’ve actually played some of your stuff on my show!” She exclaimed, now probably sounding not as casual as she was before as her inner fangirl was coming out, almost excited as the time she almost had an interview with Richie Tozier.

“You’re the radio host? Molly Morgan? Don’t know why it didn’t click

before, well thanks to you I had a lot of new fans come my way” he said with a smile as Molly smirked.

“Well you’re welcome” she said as she saluted before she grabbed her coffee cup.

“Now what about you Seb, what do you do?” Asked Ethan.

“Well as I was telling Bella before you decided to enter my life again, I’m actually a PI” he explained as Ethan raised his eyebrows.

“So come on then, what cases have you solved?” He said with a playful smirk as he leaned forward.

“Well a lot of people that like to fuck others that are not their partners, I’ve built up quite a saucy collection of photos” he smirked causing Ethan to scoff and roll his eyes.

“You dirty...” he muttered with a smirk.

“Oh come on Ethan don’t act like you wouldn’t be into it” he teased.

“I have no idea what you’re talking about” Ethan chuckled while his cheeks went a little pink also earning a little giggle from Bella at Ethan’s flustered face.

“Come on! latest case Sebby boy, lets hear it!” Exclaimed Marcus, tapping the table a little.

“Same thing really...some guy suspected his wife, wife was doing the dirty, guy didn’t take it very well. I basically had to threaten him with Jerry from next door” he explained.

“Jerry from next door?” Asked Ethan.

“Yeah big muscly guy from next door, he’s really nice, you’d probably like him” shrugged Seb before taking a sip from his coffee.

It went quiet again as Molly looked around at the others “look...it’s nice that you’ve all met each other again and I’ve gotten to know you all but...you going to explain what’s going on?” Started Molly as she looked back at her sister.

Bella swallowed as her hands almost clenched her coffee cup.

“We were all brought back here for a reason right?” She started as she looked at them all.

“I saw on the news about a couple found dead here...they described it as an animalistic attack, something told me I had to come back...almost like I was drawn here” she explained.

“I heard the same thing on the radio” joined in Marcus

“I got a letter about a client...there was a red balloon attached to the

letter” nervously swallowed Seb.

“I got a call from the resident home about my dad” muttered Ethan as he let out a shaky breath, remembering what happened about an hour ago.

Bella swallowed as she looked around at the group.

“Something has brought us all here...I saw it at the movie theatre all those years ago and I saw it now, it’s coming for us and I...I don’t know what I’m supposed to do” she explained and all eyes at the table widened.

“What do you mean coming for us? What’s coming for us?” Asked Seb as panic started to fill his voice. Ethan was quiet, trying to clutch his own trembling hands, did she see what he saw back there? Did she see the clown?

“Bells? I’m still not remembering much so I need you to help me out here” Said Marcus with worry too, he needed answers. Something back here in Derry made him so scared that he struggled hard in life, Bella must know something, he remembers that him and Bella made an oath to protect each other. What was the oath for? Was it for whatever Bella had saw?

“Bells?” He said again as she looked at them all with fear in her eyes. “I saw....I saw...a c-clown” she said and it all started to come back to them all.

“I’m sorry what?” Spoke up Molly, incredibly confused as she looked at the panicked reactions of them all.

Seb remembers running through Derry screaming out for help but everyone looked at him like he was crazy, zombie hands...zombie hands grabbed at him. He remembers the feel of the peeling flesh against his skin as they grabbed for him, the red balloons...the clown had a red balloon...oh my god it all makes sense.

It started coming back to Marcus too...that night, the way he cried and sobbed for his mom as he was basically pinned down and tortured by the clown. He pulled tighter on his sleeves as he felt his heart pounding in his chest, he remembers its face as it was getting ready to devour him. His whole life was a living hell because of it and he didn’t even know. His knee bounced a little and his fists clenched.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about, what clown Bella?”

Bella’s eyes snapped back at Molly

“You call a cab and get the fuck out of here” she said, her voice almost sounding harsh but Molly could see the fear in her eyes.

“No! None of this is making sense! I’m not leaving until you explain! Bella!” She barked back before Bella quickly stood up causing the others to jump a little.

“I’m sorry I can’t do this” she muttered before quickly leaving the table and the cafe.

Ethan was the one to quickly get up and follow her out the shop. As Marcus looked back he remembers what he heard Ethan say all those years ago about how he’d always protect Bella. Seb knew it too, Ethan was still deeply in love with that girl and that still hasn’t changed, those feelings all those years ago are still there. Seb wonders if Ethan has been lonely all those years...like he was waiting for her.

Marcus looked through the window as Ethan caught up to Bella and grabbed her shoulders to face him. He could see the soft look on his face like he was trying to calm her down, almost like he remembered that night at the movie theatre as he watched him comfort a screaming Bella. That comforting look was still there, even now. Eddie was a nice kid an all but...it should have been Ethan. Moving his eyes away from the window he placed his hand on Molly’s shoulder to try and calm her.

“I think I remember everything...do you?” Started Seb as he looked back away from the window to Marcus and Molly.

“Y-Yeah...I think so too...we’ll explain it to you” Responded Marcus as his hand gently squeezed Molly’s shoulder.

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“Hey Bella!” Called out Ethan as he followed her out but she continued to walk, her feet speeding up a little.

He caught up with her, turning to face her as he grabbed both of her shoulders to stop her from moving.

“Hey, Hey it’s okay” he whispered with reassurance as he looked into her eyes.

"I can't do this Ethan, you probably think I'm crazy but--"

"-I don't, I know exactly what you're talking about because an hour ago I was attacked by it" He said causing her eyes to widen. He was attacked just then too?

"Look this is terrifying and obviously it's brought us all back but...why don't we talk, just me and you if you want, we'll just go somewhere and talk yeah?" He suggested as Bella looked up at him.

Those soft eyes of his, making her feel safe all those years ago and she was feeling it again. "Just me and you" he whispered.

Bella nervously swallowed as she nodded her head.

"Okay" she whispered as Ethan gave her a soft smile.

"Okay" he whispered back as he moved his hands from her shoulders and went to turn around to find somewhere to talk.

What Ethan wasn't expecting was for Bella's hand to reach for his. He looked back at her, giving a soft smile before he took her smaller, delicate hand in his and they started walking.

8. Chapter Eight - Run

Summary for the Chapter:

Bella and Ethan talk while Seb, Molly and Marcus run.

Bella and Ethan ended up at the kissing bridge while on their walk, a place that was incredibly familiar to everyone in Derry, Ethan remembers one time considering carving a certain thing on it but he never did. They both leaned against the fragile looking boards as they looked out at the lake, it was surprisingly peaceful given the circumstances.

“What happened in the movie theatre?....all those years ago?” Asked Ethan as he turned to look at her. He watched as she nervously swallowed, hands clenching a little tighter on the board.

She exhaled before she quickly turned to look at him, his eyes always so soft and comforting. She turned back away to look out at the lake and woods “it started off with a balloon, a red one....it was floating across the movie screen during the movie and I-I don’t know I just...I just felt like I was being drawn to it” she started as Ethan kept silent, listening to every word she had to say because even then as a kid he wondered what happened back there, once he experienced his attack he wondered if it was linked with what happened to Bella.

“That’s how I ended up in that closet, I followed the balloon into there like the stupid kid I was...that’s when I saw it, the clown and something inside me was just screaming to run. As I did the door started to get further and further away and the walls started to close in and I felt like I couldn’t breathe so I just curled up in a ball and waited for my end...that was until you pulled me out” she explained before turning back to look at Ethan. He remembers her terrified screams as he ran to the door to pull her out, he remembers her clutching onto him as she cried her eyes out, in that moment he wanting nothing more to protect her from all dangers of the world so that she could never feel that scared again.

“If it wasn’t for you I think I would have joined all the other missing children” she muttered as she kept her eyes on him.

"I remember Seb telling me about the clown...he said it felt like it was feeding off his fear" he explained causing Bella to scoff.

"Explains the walls closing in" she said.

"You said it came for you? The moment you came back?....has it come for you before?" She asked as Ethan nervously swallowed.

"Do you remember the strange, creepy looking house towards the back of Derry? That's where it found me...I remember that summer standing in front of that house with my drawing book...suddenly all these words were appearing on the blank paper...insults freak, coward, loser, failure" he muttered, voice getting quieter as he listed the insults, Bella's eyebrows furrowed together as she listened the the horrible words...is this how Ethan saw himself?

"Next thing I know there's this clown in front of me and I just ran and I'm hearing my father's voice in my head calling me a failure and a coward....last night I got a phone call telling me he was dying and that he wanted to see me" he continued and Bella noticed how his eyes started to glass over with tears.

"You see, my whole life he never cared about me...I was just a shadow, so when I came here I just...I didn't know how to feel, in a way I felt happy? Because he wanted to see me, acknowledge my existence you know? But at the same time I just felt this anger...so I told him how he made me feel all those years ago...turns out he's been dead for two years and it was the clown, continuing to tell me what a failure and a coward I am and that I'll die alone" he explained before it grew silent again. The clown feeds off fears...this was Ethan's fear? That everyone, especially his father sees him this way? It made Bella's heart sink at that thought of Ethan feeling this way about himself.

"Those things it said...is that how you see yourself?" She whispered as Ethan sadly chuckled, hands clenching the board of the kissing bridge as he looked out at the lake.

"Do you want the honest answer? Because the truth is....yeah" he confessed as this sadness began to fill Bella at the thought of Ethan feeling like this.

"All my life I've been a shadow, even now...no one saw me then and no one sees me now"

"I saw you" Said Bella before Ethan scoffed and shook his head.

"No you didn't...no one did" in a way it took Bella by surprise the sudden harshness from Ethan.

"Because the truth is Bella no one cared about me back then and they still don't, no one gave me a second thought about me and I bet you didn't either" he spat before he closed his eyes, cringing at the harshness of his words, he shouldn't let his emotions get to him.

"I'm sorry" he muttered, as he opened his eyes, Bella had shuffled closer to him before turning to face him "you're wrong, don't assume my feelings about you because you don't know!" she snapped a little before she sighed.

"I'm sorry that it took me so long to see you, but the truth is after what happened at the movie theatre all I thought about was you!" She started.

"Even when I came back here even though everything was still a blur I just remember someone pulling me out of the movie theatre and I felt safe. I remembered those brown eyes I'm looking at right now" she said with a soft smile as she tapped one of his eyelids causing a sad chuckle to leave him.

"So don't assume that I didn't see you or think about you because I did" Ethan didn't know what to say, in a way he felt like the clown was probably playing tricks on him again.

"Do you...do you remember what I said all those years ago? Outside the store?" He asked causing a little smile to appear on Bella's face.

"That's you'd protect me if I needed protecting?" She said with a smirk. She remembers it very clearly now, putting the pieces together he must have hurt his knee running from IT but when he said that he'd always protect her she just felt this warmth inside her, she couldn't explain it. All those years ago Ethan made her feel a certain way, similar but different to how Eddie made her feel but she couldn't explain it...she still can't.

"I still stand by it...maybe we were brought back here to kill it before it kills us, stop it from coming after others you know? It's tried to come after us twice but I promise you....I won't let anything happen to you" He said as he placed his hand over hers. His hand big and warm compared to hers, she softly smiled as she placed her other hand on top of his, her thumb stroking across the back of his hand causing his heart to feel like it was fluttering.

"We should head back, find the others" suggested Bella.
"Y-yeah we should"

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"So this clown has been tormenting children? Feeding from them?"
"You must think we're crazy right?" Said Marcus.
"Maybe if it was just one of you saying it but all of you panicked the second she mentioned a clown" Responded Molly.
"Oh god" she muttered as she leaned forward, rubbing her hands over her face "and I've brought myself to this creepy ass town"

"Well, welcome to Derry!" Said Seb sarcastically as he finished the last of his coffee.

"So does it turn up just as the clown or?"

"It feeds off fear, seems it shapeshifts or torments us on our biggest fears before eventually from what I'm guessing, eats you" Explained Seb

"Mine is zombies"

"Mines the dark...what about you?" Asked Marcus and Molly felt like her heart was in her throat...they can't know what she's truly afraid of, they can't know what she's hiding.

"I don't know, I don't think I have a main fear" she lied as her hands clenched her mug a little.

Seb took his phone out as he checked the time "Look it's been nice meeting you guys but I'm supposed to be speaking to a client so I have to go" he said as he collected his things together.

"Hey are you sure it's a client? What if it's the clown?" Asked Marcus causing Seb to pause in his tracks.

"It has crossed my mind...like I'll just be careful, I'll be okay" he said before he made his way out the coffee shop.

It was quiet between the remaining two as they looked at the door "you don't think it's a client do you?" She said as she turned to look at Marcus.

"Nope" that's when Molly got up from her seat, collecting her things together "where you going?"

"To follow him! We can't let him go alone!"

He watched as Molly got up, he was honestly terrified because he didn't want to face this thing again but at the same time he can't let

blonde Morgan go out alone because Bells would kill him.

“Goddamn it” he muttered as he grabbed his things and followed behind.

.....

Seb has ended up wondering the streets as his client had left him a little clueless about where to find him to talk. It did make him feel on edge, the worry that it could be the clown here and using the whole client thing as bait.

The parade was still going on, if the clown was around it wouldn't attack in front of all these people right? Fuck this place, fuck Derry, was this job even worth it? He was walking around for a while before he ended up in Neibolt street. That's when his phone rang, as he looked at the caller ID he saw it was an unknown number, his client?

He hesitantly answered the phone before putting it up to his ear “hello?”

“Hey is this Seb, it's Vic!” Said the voice that sounded so familiar...Vic? Cousin Vic?

“Cousin Vic?” He asked

“Hey it's been a while” he chuckled

“Yeah no shit it's been a while, fuck! Where are you?” Asked Seb as he continued to walk down the street.

“You're nearly there” He Responded causing Seb to pause in his steps, as he looked forward he saw the house, the dark creepy ass house from all those years ago that everyone would talk about. He noticed how awfully nice Vic sounded on the phone, he was never this nice with him as kids. As a kid Vic found Seb incredibly annoying and hated the fact that Seb had to tag along with him, he remembers that time Seb stepped in the defend Stanley Uris from the Bowers gang and the look of disappointment on his cousin's face.

“What's the matter Seb?” Spoke a dark chuckle on the other side of the phone.

“I thought you missed me? Don't you want to float with me?” He Asked as suddenly he felt a cold hand grab his ankle. He couldn't scream, he couldn't speak as he looked down. Emerging now from the ground, Seb could be sick at the sight and now the hard hitting realisation of his past. Out came a rotting corpse of Vic, still grabbing

onto his ankle, his throat was slit and he was covered in dirt and smelt like rotten flesh, the smell was almost enough to make him want to heave. Vic was murdered...Henry Bowers killed him...he remembers now and now he was back as his worst nightmare.

As Seb tried to get away, whimpering in fear he fell back, the decaying hand still clawing at him, holding tight into his ankle. Seb finally yelled out, kicking his leg to try and shake Vic's decaying hand off him, feeling the peeling skin drag against his leg, crying out in fear and the crushing feeling of grief now for Vic.

"I'm so sorry!" He cried out as he kicked the rotted corpse of Vic causing it to push back and let go of Seb's ankle. He scrambled onto his feet as he began to run as fast as he could. He was having serious déjà vu as he ran down the streets yelling out for help and again everyone looking at him like he's crazy.

As he ran he in a way felt relief as he saw both Marcus and Molly coming his way "IT's here, IT's fucking here, run!" He yelled out causing them both to go wide eyed and run as fast as they could, they didn't know where they were going but they just needed to get away. But as they ran they ended up splitting off from each other.

Molly ended up in the direction of the parade while Marcus and Seb split off somewhere else. She tried to make her way through the crowd as it suddenly felt too overwhelming, people crushing up against her. She felt like the place was now spinning as she began to hear voices from the people in the parade speaking. She couldn't make out what they were saying at first but the longer she stayed in the crowd the louder the chant started to grow, growing louder and louder.

"Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret"

"Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret"

"Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret"

Molly felt a whimper in her throat as she began to panic, people know? How do they know? She doesn't know these people.

"You shouldn't have come here Molly" chuckled a dark voice as the chanting suddenly grew quiet and it felt like time had froze. The chanting had stopped and everyone froze, turning to look at Molly.

She panicked as she looked around everyone crowded around her, staring at her as if she was disgusting.

“Because now everyone knows your secret, you’re dirty little secret” as she looked ahead, her eyes went wide with fear and panic as she saw it, the clown. It’s bright orange hair and toothy grin while holding a red balloon, just like how Marcus and Seb had described it. “You’re not the only one here with a dirty little secret” it grinned as Molly shuffled back, bumping into people standing around her.

She panicked as she tried to get away, pushing her way through the crowd and the chanting began again.

“Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret”

“Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret”

“Molly has a secret, a dirty little secret”

Along side that she could hear the sound of the clown’s laugh causing her to whine in fear as she shoved her way through the crowd of people looking at her in disgust and shame.

As she broke from the crowd she continued to run as fast as she could. She didn’t look back as she ran, she didn’t even have a plan of where she was going she just ran.

She was terrified and now felt this sudden pain of humiliation and disgust with herself on top of the fear. Even though she was now far away from the crowd it didn’t stop the memories of the chant in her head.

As she continued running there she saw Bella and Ethan, she screamed out as Bella turned to look, eyes wide with panic before both of them were now running towards her.

“Molly?” She called out as Molly ran into her arms, forcefully shoving her a little at the impact.

“I-I saw it! I saw the fucking clown! It knows who I am!” She explained, voice speaking fast with panic and fear as the two crowded around her.

“Hey you’re okay now, we’re here” Said Ethan with reassurance as he put his hand on her shoulder.

That’s when Seb came running over “thank god I found you guys, I saw IT, it tried to come after me” explained Seb as he leaned forward,

hands on his knees as he panted for breath.

"I saw it too" Muttered Molly in response

"Oh shit"

As Bella looked at the group that's when he noticed that there was still no sign of Marcus. Worry began to fill her at the memories of that night all those years ago and how vulnerable he was back then, what if IT was coming after him next?

"Where's Marcus?"

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Marcus had ended up running into a random building, he doesn't know why, it just seemed like a place in his mind to go. He didn't think all he knew was he needed to get to some sort of safety away from the fucker, he couldn't bare to experience what he did all those years ago again. What he learned was that entering that building was a big mistake.

What he had ran into was some abandoned building and the next minute the door was being slammed shut and all lights were out. Marcus now in complete darkness started to panic, he felt sick and suddenly the terror from all those years ago was coming back to him. His hand touched walls in search of some sort of light switch or an exit because he felt the desperate need to get out.

"Miss me Marcus?" Called out a voice, an all too familiar voice, a voice that haunted his dreams most nights. He felt a whimper trapped in his throat as his heart now pounding in his chest, he's not going to escape this time, there was no way he was going to escape.

"Gonna cry for mommy again" it teased as Marcus swallowed, shaking his head without realising, his whole body was trembling. He could cry but he wasn't going to let that thing get a bigger kick out of this.

That's when he noticed the glowing eyes in the darkness, those familiar, terrifying eyes from all those years ago that still haunt him to this day. He began to shuffle backwards, trying to back away from the eyes that seemed to be getting closer and closer to him. Emerging in the darkness Marcus could see the clown now huge, glowing eyes and razor sharp teeth, crawling towards him, loud stomps filling the

room.

Marcus whimpered and panicked, backing himself into a corner of the room as the only sound to be heard was the sound of growls and his own panicked cries. His trembling hands covered his face as he cried out in fear as he saw the huge hand, reaching out to grab at him. This was it, this was the end, his nightmares were bait and he took it...now the nightmares were back into his reality and this time it really was going to be the death of him, not the alcohol...not that incident...the actual nightmare was going to kill him.

Suddenly a brightness filled the room and multiple hands were dragging him. It felt like that night all over again, where all the hands pulled at him in the darkness.

Marcus yelled out as he tried to break free from the hands, he needed them off, he needed to get away "Marcus! Hey Marcus! You're safe now you're okay!" Called a familiar voice, as he opened his eyes he saw it was Bella and Ethan holding him while Seb and Molly also stood around, seems the group all found each other while running away from the Clown. Safe? He wasn't safe? IT was coming for him and he knew there was no escaping it this time.

"Safe?! You think I'm fucking safe?!" He snapped back, tears forming in his eyes as he looked at Bella "this thing has ruined my life and now it's going to be the death of me! It's gone for now but it will be back!" He spat as he shoved the hands off him. His car was still outside the coffee shop, he can't stay here, he needs to get out of Derry.

He got up on his feet as he looked at everyone with tears in his eyes, he felt so weak and pathetic...like he did all those years ago. "I...I can't do this" he whimpered as he shoved himself past the group and made his way to his car.

The group watched as Marcus walked away, making his way to the coffee shop. Bella looked at Marcus and back at the group "I'll talk to him, there's a hotel not far from here, everyone head there and I'll catch up" she said before she rushed over to try and talk to Marcus. Something tells her that there is a lot he's hiding from her.

Author's Note:

Hi, it would honestly mean a lot if you could leave a comment letting me know what you think so far! I have honestly spent so much time and effort on this and the characters in this story so it would mean a lot if you could leave a comment.

9. Chapter Nine - Marcus

Summary for the Chapter:

This chapter focuses on Marcus' past fifteen years ago.

Warning - Chapter contains some sexual themes (but nothing graphic) alcohol use and death.

Bella arrived at the coffee shop car park just in time to open Marcus' passenger door and climb into his car before he could drive anywhere. Marcus stopped what he was doing as he turned to look at her, he doesn't know why he's surprised because Bella has always been stubborn, he should have known she wouldn't have grown out of the stubbornness.

"Get out the car Bella"

"Not until you talk to me"

"What is there to say? It's back and it's coming back for me I-"

"Marcus we're all here together, and we need to stop it-"

"I CANT!" Yelled Marcus causing Bella to jump a little at his outburst. She watched as Marcus look at her apologetically before his head rested on the steering wheel and he began to sob.

Bella swallowed, feeling a lump in her throat at how pained and terrified Marcus was. Her hand reached out to gently rub his back in an attempt to comfort him "y-y-you see..." Started Marcus as he lifted his head back up, tears were still coming down but he tried his hardest to speak.

"You all forgot about Derry..in-in a way I didn't because it haunted me most nights for twenty seven years...I-I am waking up from these nightmares that feel so real, always feeling like memories...but now I know they are, I'd cry because I've got scars all over my body that I didn't know how I got, no memory of them I just have them" he explained as Bella's eyebrows furrowed together, scars? IT only tried to pull him under the bed right?

"Scars?" She said as Marcus' trembling hands clutched the steering wheel "Marcus?" She warned as he let out a shaky breath.

"There was a lot I didn't tell you about that night because I didn't want to scare you...and I felt like I deserved it for not believing you,

it felt like a punishment....you see the clown didn't just try to drag me under the bed...I had multiple sharp hands hold me down and torture me, scratching down my body and arms and digging their claws in, it hurt so bad and I cried and begged for my mom but she never came, the clown lay above me and laughed and made fun of me before it dug it's claws into me too....I thought I was going to die that night, Somehow, god, somehow I was able to break free from the hands grabbing me and I dragged myself across the floor crying for my mom while the Clown grabbed at my ankles, I was able to make it to my bedroom door and open it and that's when it disappeared....I was covered in blood but I changed my clothes before you came because I didn't want to scare you" he explained. Bella felt sick, Marcus went through absolute hell and kept it to himself for all those years all because he felt like he deserved it and because he didn't want to scare her? Her eyes were tearing up as she looked at him.

She watched as his hands left the stirring wheel and slowly pulled up his sleeves to reveal the long, deep red scars on his arms, it looked like claws had scratched him. Tears were now falling down her face as she looked at the scars "I-is there anymore?" She whimpered before Marcus' reached to the bottom of his shirt, slowly pulling it up to reveal more deep red scars on his body. A choked gasp left Bella as she put her hand over her mouth and sobs began to leave her. It did this to her best friend, tortured and terrified him and continued to haunt him for all these years.

Marcus looked up at her again as he let go of his shirt, choking on his own sobs before Bella quickly reached for him and pulled him to her. Wrapping her arms around him as he began to sob again, feeling the comfort Bella gave him that night all those years ago only this time now she knows the truth of what really happened.

They stayed like that for a while, even when the tears had stopped from them both, only the sounds of their sniffles to be heard in the car. They both could fall asleep like this if they wanted to, they would have as kids but it felt too dangerous given the circumstances of what was currently going on in Derry.

"The nightmares got too much for me...and I started drinking, in the end I ended up alone and losing someone I really care about"

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15 years earlier

It was the same every night, Marcus would sit at the bar alone with a drink in his hand, minding his own business as he drank his sorrows away. He's been feeling like the nightmares and visions have been getting worse and he just wanted to ignore them...he just wanted to forget. He had woken up from another bad dream and decided he'll head to the bar to forget about it all.

"Can I get you anything else?" Asked the woman behind the bar. Marcus must admit she's very pretty, she had brown hair and had a styled scruffy look to it, it matched the alternative look she had going on.

"Just the same, please" muttered Marcus as he pushed the glass towards her.

"Gotcha" she said with a wink and a smile as she turned back around to fill his glass again. Marcus had seen her a few times working here when he's come to drink, she's always got this confidence about her and this fire and most likely way out of his league. She passed the glass over as Marcus offered a quiet thanks before she went back to work.

Marcus was just feeling the warm buzz of the alcohol but not enough to actually feel drunk as of yet, people around him on the other hand was another story. One guy in particular had been eyeing the bartender up a lot of the night and now the drunken mess had finally opened his mouth.

"You're hot" he started, voice slurred as the words rolled off his tongue.

"Thanks for the compliment" she said before continuing on with her work.

"When do you go on break"

"Wouldn't you like to know" she muttered, clearly uninterested.

"Oh come on! Don't you wanna go around the back with me?"

"No thanks go find another pretty lady" she said.

"What? Am I that ugly! It can be a quick one! You don't even have to look at my face!" This guy was making Marcus annoyed, he knows it's none of his business but the idea that he's talking to her like she's some sort of sex object angered him.

"I said no" she said, tone of voice now becoming harsh.

As he leaned forward against the bar he went to reach for the woman's arm and Marcus decided he had enough.

"She said no" he spoke up causing both heads to turn

"She's serving your drinks so why don't you be a bit more respectful hey?!" He said at the drunken man.

The man leaned back in his seat before muttering a "fucking whore" under his breath. Marcus was about to step in and say something else before suddenly the woman was grabbing the man by the shirt and pulling him close "wanna say that again?" She said as she looked him in the eyes.

"No?" She teased as the man looked at her in shock "get him out of here" she said as she shoved the man causing him to stumble back a little. One of the body guards of the venue took hold of the man and escorted him out the building.

"I didn't need you to step in but thanks" she said as she turned to look at Marcus.

"Yeah I can see that" he muttered as he raised an eyebrow before a drunk was being pushed towards him "on the house"

"You don't have to-"

"No I insist" she said before smirking at him before cleaning the bar counter.

Once she was done cleaning the bar she came over to Marcus' direction and leaned against the bar, facing him.

"You got a name?" She asked which caused him to lift his head up with surprise.

"Have you got a name?" He responded causing her to smirk.

"You first, I always see you come in here and I'd like to know the name behind mystery guy" She said with almost a mischievous grin.

"Marcus, do I get to know your name?" He Responded.

"April" April...April is a nice name.

"Nice name for a beautiful lady" he said with a smirk causing her to raise her eyebrow.

"Well aren't you a charmer? You're not gonna ask me to go around the back like the last guy are you?"

"Of course not! I'm a classy guy!" he exclaimed

"Course you are" she chuckled

“What makes you think I’m not?”

“Because you’re drinking in this shitty bar”

“You work in this shitty bar”

“True but it’s what helps me pay my bills So what do you do Marcus?” She asked as she leaned forward a little closer.

“At the moment I just work in an office” he explained

“You wear a suit?” She teased a little causing Marcus to shrug his shoulders “Yeah but it’s nothing special, I also do a little music on the side” he said causing her to raise her eyebrows with interest.

“Oh? You sing?”

“A little, play guitar too”

“You think you could show me?” She asked as she tilted her head a little almost in a playful manner.

“Oh I don’t have it with me-“

“-I have one at my place”

Oh.....OH? The pin dropped, she was asking what he thinks she was asking right?

Marcus raised his eyebrows and eyes widened a little as he looked up at her with surprise. “I’ve just finished my shift if you wanna follow me” She whispered, her voice low before she moved away from him to grab her coat. As she put it on she looked back at Marcus with a smirk before she began to walk out the bar. Marcus smirked, downing the rest of his drink in one gulp before putting the glass down and following behind.

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“I don’t really know if this thing is in tune, I don’t really play guitar to be honest” she chuckled as she pulled it out of her closet for Marcus.

“So why do you have one?”

“I tried to learn but I didn’t have the time and patience apparently” she responded as she passed the guitar to him.

He took it before strumming across the strings hearing the terrible sounding tune that followed behind “this is definitely not in tune” he laughed as he started working on tuning the guitar.

“It’s not everyday I invite a guy back to mine to tune my guitar” Said April as she sat down in front of him.

“I’m just a special kind of guy huh?” Said Marcus with a smile as he

gently strummed the strings, working out if they were in tune or not.

"I think I have just about got it in tune...I think" he smirked before he put his fingers into position. He just began to strum a little tune, it was a little something he had been working on. It was a little nerve wracking he must admit, he's played for small audiences before but something about playing in front of her sent his nerves in place. She was leaning back in her seat, a soft smile as she listened to him play.

That's when he began to softly sing and her eyebrows raised up in surprise at what she was hearing. What he showed her was still a work in progress so it was definitely nerve wrecking for him to play original material. When he did finish she clapped her hands together with a smile on her face.

"Nice to know that your weren't bullshitting, you've got a nice voice" she said with a smile.

"You think so?" He asked, a smile on his face.

"Yeah!" That's when she got up and gently took the guitar from his hands and put it down somewhere on the floor next to the bed.

Marcus felt himself getting a little flustered as April climbed into his lap before her fingers traveled into his hair.

She looked down at Marcus, biting her lip a little "don't be so shy" she whispered as she inched closer to his lips to pull him into a kiss. Before she could, Marcus was grabbing her hips and turning to push her onto the bed, causing her to yelp as he caught her by surprise and towered over her. A dark chuckle in her throat as Marcus inched his face closer to hers "who says I'm being shy?" He whispered to her lips before he pulled her into a kiss.

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"Could I ask you something?" Asked April now sat up in bed while Marcus rested against the headboard.

"How come you kept this on?" She asked as she pulled a little at the long sleeve shirt he was wearing. Marcus nervously swallowed "I um...I guess it's a little personal but, I guess I have an insecurity?" He explained as she looked back at him.

"Scars?" She asked and he nodded his head "Okay...that's fine, if it makes you feel better I happen to find scars incredibly sexy" she

smirked causing Marcus to start laughing.

“Good to know”

As the laughter died down April was playing a little with the shirt she was currently wearing before she looked up at him “Can I be honest with you?...one night stands is not something I do...I mean if I’m honest you’ve kinda caught my eye for a while and even though we’ve only really met each other today...I like you” she confessed and Marcus was honestly surprised that a girl as beautiful as April and could probably get any guy she wanted had eyes for him?

“I like you too”

“Do you get what I’m trying to say?”

“Yeah I do...and I’d like that” he said as he reached to take her hand, his thumb softly brushing across it as they softly smiled at each other.

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Things seemed to be going well between the two, April and Marcus were now officially dating and for the first time in a while Marcus almost felt a little carefree.

They lay in bed, April was in her underwear while wearing one of Marcus’ buttoned up shirts that he uses for work. Music softly playing on the radio as she lay her head on his chest. “Okay who would be your free pass?” She asked causing Marcus to raise an eyebrow “free what?”

“Free pass! If you could sleep with one other person apart from me who would it be?” She explained as she sat up a little, Marcus chuckled as he lay back in bed.

“Theres this small comedian, he’s not hugely famous but something tells me he will be going places, heard of Richie Tozier?”

“Richie who?”

“Richie Tozier, that’s my free pass” he said causing April to chuckle.

“Well if this Richie does get big and famous I’ll be sure to remember he’s your free pass...so you into guys too?” She asked as Marcus shrugged his shoulders “I don’t know, I just feel like I like who I like, doesn’t matter who they are you know?” He explained.

“What about you? You have a free pass?” He Asked as April shrugged her shoulders.

“I haven’t decided yet but I’ll be sure to let you know” she smirked as

she gently slapped his arm.

As Marcus went to stretch, his shirt slid up a little to reveal some of his torso and that's when April noticed the deep red scars. Marcus looked confused to what April was looking at but as he looked down to see his shirt had risen up a little his eyes widened before he quickly climbed out of bed and locked himself in the bathroom before April could call after him.

Marcus leaned against the bathroom door, clutching his body as he felt tears now burning up in his eyes. Letting out a shakey breath as he exhaled he attempted to blink them away. He heard the soft knock on the door before April's voice "hey Marcus...I'm not going to judge you for what's under the shirt, if you don't want to talk about it or show me that's okay...I'm not going to think of you any differently" she explained as Marcus could feel his lip trembling a little.

"I know you've got scars because you told me, I just didn't know what to expect that's all....I've told you before but I happen to find scars hot" she said causing a sad chuckle to leave Marcus and he could sense her smile on the other side of the door.

"You don't have to be afraid to show me" She whispered as Marcus closed his eyes, taking a deep breath in before breathing out. Hesitantly he got up from the door and slowly unlocked it. As he opened the door there stood April with a comforting look in her eyes.

She watched as Marcus with shaking hands reached for the bottom of this shirt, slowly pulling it up before pulling the shirt over his head. He looked up at the sad look in April's eyes as she scanned his body. Her eyes looking at the deep scars all over his torso and arms and now as she really looks there's some on his ankles too, it had looked like something had clawed at him.

"Disgusting right?" He said as April shook her head.

"Not at all....what happened? If you don't mind me asking" She asked and that's when Marcus broke down because he didn't know how he got these scars, he doesn't know where they came from.

"I-I don't know, I h-have no memory of it" he began to sob before April was rushing over to wrap her arms around him. His hands wrapped around her smaller frame as he pressed his head against her

shoulder and sobbed.

They kept hold of each other as April guided them both to sit on the floor. They sat there for a while as Marcus slowly calmed down “I keep having these dreams...terrifying dreams that almost feel like...memories and I feel like it's linked to these but I...I can't remember anything” he explained, voice sounding croaky and a little nasally from the crying.

He felt a shiver as April gently brushed her fingers across the scars on his arm before she was bringing his arm to her lips before pressing soft kisses across his arm causing his pulse to jump and his breath hitch.

She leaned forward to press a kiss to his left cheek, then his right cheek and then the top of his head. Moving away she moved to look right into his eyes, the feeling of vulnerability as April was seeing a really sad and vulnerable side to him that she had never seen before. Her eyes so warm and comforting to him before she was taking Marcus by the hand and leading him back to bed.

For the first time in a very long time Marcus actually felt safe for once, the feeling of reassurance and protection.

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Most nights Marcus and April would head out either when she had a night off or he would hang out at the bar she worked at. He had made two friends, a guy named Brad and a woman named Tammy. They were loud, lively, obnoxious and April did not like either of them.

April hated now much Marcus would drink around them and how they encouraged him. Brad looked like some drugged up biker and not that April would say it out loud but she thought Tammy looked like a skank.

It came to a point where Marcus was meeting these people every night and coming home drunk out of his mind, leaving April to look after him and put him to bed.

She spent most nights cleaning up his vomit and dragging him into bed before looking after him hungover the next day. He was an alcoholic, she should have known, now that she looks back it was so obvious, the signs were so there but because she was so in love with him she ignored it. He was always at the bar when she first met him and was always wanting a drink. She saw how he would take drink after drink after drink.

One night she couldn't take anymore, there he was sitting on the couch and vomiting into the bucket before April broke down crying. Dropping to the floor, hands over her eyes as she began to sob "Why won't you stop?" She sobbed and begged as Marcus groaned in response.

He was now moving away from the bucket and leaning back on the couch as she continued to sob. She loved him and understood that this all probably links back to the scars on his body and the nightmares he suffers but she didn't know how much more she could take of this.

Once she had calmed down she had gotten up and headed to bed, shutting the door behind her, she didn't want to look at him or speak to him.

The next day Marcus was hungover, there was nothing new about that. Only this time April was done, she was tired of looking after him in this state. When she woke up straight away she got a glass of water on the kitchen and slammed it down on the table causing Marcus to jump a little with fright and groan at the pain.

"Sorry? You got a nasty headache?" She fake mocked.

"What's wrong? You're angry" he groaned as he sat up, hand on his head.

"You think? Because night after night after night I'm looking after your drunken ass, cleaning up your vomit and at your hands and knees taking care of you" she snapped.

"I shouldn't have to live like this, it's not fair on me and I have never felt so weak and degraded in my life Marcus!" she continued as she felt herself tearing up.

She watched as Marcus lifted his head up a little to look at her "I'm

sorry” he whispered, hand reaching out to take hers.

“I’m so sorry, I love you so much and I don’t want you to feel that way” he said as he gently stroked her hand.

“Then I need you to stop Marcus....please? For me? And most importantly for yourself” she begged, Marcus had never seen such a sad look in her eyes. Now that he looked at her he saw how miserable she looked and the dark circles under her eyes...he caused this.

“Okay...I’ll stop”

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That night April was working at the bar and in came Marcus coming through the doors with a bouquet of flowers. Now this was a first, April was never sure if she was even a flower kind of girl but the idea that Marcus was doing this to try and make amends made her feel happy.

“For me?” She asked as he came over to the bar.

“For the most beautiful woman I’ve ever laid my eyes on” he said with a smirk as he passed the flowers a smile forming on her face.

He smiled as he watched her smell the flowers before putting them somewhere where they could stand up at the bar. In that moment it felt like how things used to be, before April really clicked on that he had a drinking problem. “I love you” He said as he took her hand and pressed a kiss to it.

“Love you too” She whispered and just as she did Brad and Tammy came through the door, in that moment she felt her own heart sink because she knew nothing was going to come from it. Brad came over in his leather get up and Tammy in the ugliest leopard dress she had ever seen, making their way over to Marcus.

“Hey Marcus!” Exclaimed Brad as he put his arms up in the air.

“Hey guys!” He said as he pulled Brad into some sort of hug before doing the same to Tammy.

She hated them, she hated them so much, they stirred the pot of trouble that was already there. “Three shots of vodka please sweetheart” Asked Brad as April glared at him.

“One for him?” She asked as she pointed at Marcus.

“Yeah?”

"I'm not serving Marcus" she said as the two raised their eyebrows in surprise.

"Why not?" Asked Brad

"Because he has a serious problem that's why" she snapped back

"It's okay April, it's just one drink" Said Marcus causing April's eyes to widen. Why was she here? He's never going to change is he?

"You're never going to change" she whispered as she shook her head feeling the pain of the realisation sink in.

"Marcus tell your girlfriend to stop being the boring bland bitch she is and give us a drink!" Spat Tammy and April was done. She grabbed a glass from under the table and poured a drink, looking directly at the girl that she calls a skank in her own head, next thing she knew she was throwing the contents of it all over Tammy.

Tammy gasped and backed away from the bar "now you just click your fingers if you want some more" she hissed, clicking her fingers before slamming the glass down on the bar and went to leave.

"April!" Called out Marcus

"No I'm done!" She spat before leaving the bar, slamming the door behind her, she will most likely be fired but she didn't care.

As she got into her car and started to drive she started to think out all the moments between her and Marcus. She remembered when they first met and his passion for music, she remembered when she first saw his scars and how vulnerable and broken he looked. The drinking goes back to that, whatever happened to cause those scars, it resulted in him drinking, Marcus wants to forget.

Maybe she could talk to someone? Get advice from a help line, get him to go to meetings because she can't let this go on. She loved Marcus and although she doesn't think she can take anymore of this, something was telling her that she can't bare the thought of leaving him to rot and drink to his death.

She sighed, gripping the stirring wheel hoping that she wasn't going to regret what she planned to do next as she turned her car around to go back.

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Marcus ended up joining Tammy and Brad for a drink, he'll face the consequences of April in the morning. Shot after shot after shot with the duo before he was at a point where he felt tipsy and was a little off balance in his steps, feeling like the room was spinning.

"I have an idea!" Started Brad before taking a big gulp of his drink shaking his head and letting out a little 'whoop' at how strong it was.

"Why don't us three head back to my place?!" He suggested causing Marcus to raise his eyebrows and Tammy to smirk.

"Oh imagine all the fun we could have with Marcus joining us" smirked Tammy before taking her shot and slamming the glass on the table.

Drunk Marcus in a way was completely oblivious to what they were suggesting as he weakly cradled his glass.

"So what do you say handsome?" She asked as Marcus looked at the two. He shrugged his shoulders before taking his shot and slamming the glass down on the table.

"Sure" he muttered before they all got out their seat to leave the bar.

Brad drove while Marcus sat in the passenger seat and Tammy in the back. Marcus didn't know about the other two but he felt too weak and intoxicated from all the drinks to do anything as he sat in the car, feeling incredibly sick. Brad and Tammy seemed incredibly lively and not paying attention to the road as they drove.

In a way the drive helped him sober up a little as he looked at the road. They had the radio on while Brad and Tammy sang incredibly loud and badly out of tune to the music, Brad looking back at Tammy in the back and yelling out drunken words.

Marcus looked at them and he felt like the car was swerving, as he looked back that the road that's when he noticed a car coming straight for them.

"BRAD WATCH OUT!" He screamed out but it was too late as the car slammed into the other and flipped over. Marcus and Tammy screaming at the top of their lungs as the car toppled and tumbled before landing upside down. Marcus sat in shock before spitting bits of broken glass that had fallen into his mouth as the smell of smoke hit him and his surroundings. He was covered in blood, he could feel it, warm against his face and he was now in agony.

As he turned to look at Brad there he sat in his seat, eyes open and lifeless. Marcus with shaking hands reached to check for a pulse as he felt himself sobering up a little, the shock of what had just happened knocking sense into him before a sob left his lips. Brad was dead, he was dead, he couldn't feel a pulse and there he lay in the chair, eyes wide, open and lifeless. That's when he heard a loud blood curdling scream coming from the other side, in the direction of the car they hit.

He squinted his eyes as he tried to focus on who was in the car, it was a girl with long brown hair...no it wasn't just any girl...it was April. Marcus was now hysterical "APRIL!!" He screamed, trying to find his seatbelt to get out.

"APRIL!" He screamed out again, hands yanking at the seatbelt before his trembling hands found the button to unbuckle the seatbelt. "APRIL I'M COMING!" He screamed as he fell out the seat and began to crawl to the window, lifting his feet to kick at the door, smashing the glass before crawling out, hands and arms now cut from glass but he didn't care, he needed to get to April.

He got up onto his feet, still feeling tipsy as he made his way over to April's car. She sat in her seat, cut on her head, nose bleeding as she was sobbing and panicking. "Baby I'm here, I'm here" he cried as he opened the car door and reached for her seatbelt.

She sobbed and cried as her trembling hands found his jacket as he lifted her out of the car and moved her as far away from the crash.

As he put her down he felt himself grew weak "Marcus?" She whimpered before he dropped to the floor.

"Marcus!" April's panic was the last thing he heard and the look of her bloody face towering above him before he blacked out.

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When Marcus woke up he was surrounded by bright light and the sound of machines beeping. His vision a little blurred as he adjusted before he saw someone standing at the end of the bed. As his vision adjusted he was it was April, a miserable look on her face along with a bandage at the top of her head and small cuts and grazes on her face.

"A-April" he groaned, voice croaky as he reached his hand out for her

but she didn't take it.

"Do you remember what happened?" She asked.

Marcus swallowed as he thought hard to try and remember what had happened "I...I was in the car, B-Brad was driving and Tammy in the b-back, he wasn't looking" he explained as April's hands clenched the backboard of the bed.

"Brad is dead...they found high levels of alcohol in his system, they said he died on impact, Tammy is fine, in shock but again high levels of alcohol in her system...same with you" she explained, voice breaking at the last part.

He did this, he killed Brad...he should have been responsible and stopped him from getting in the car and driving but he didn't...he was to blame for all of this.

He watched as her lip trembled and her eyes started to tear up "I turned around to head back to the bar to offer my help and support, get you help to stop....but you don't want to stop do you?"

"That's not true, I want to stop, I do!"

"Then why drink like you did tonight? Why get in the car with a clearly drunk driver?! Why put me through so much pain and misery?!" She begged and now Marcus was tearing up.

"Because I don't know how to stop....I'm scared that these nightmares and visions will come back" he explained as his lip began to tremble.

April tilted her head a little, a look of empathy in her eyes "then I can get someone to talk to you here, get someone to point you in the right direction of professional help" she offered as Marcus nodded his head.

"Please" he whispered

"Okay....but I...I can't be around for this, I need to focus on myself for once and you need time to help yourself get better, to get over this addiction" Marcus felt his heart sink at what he was hearing, his chest felt heavy.

"N-no April I love you, I love you"

"I love you too...but we can't be around each other it's not healthy...for either of us" she said as tears were now coming down.

"April please!"

"I'm so sorry....goodbye Marcus" she whispered before biting her lip as an attempt to stop the tears from coming before turning away.

"No, please April, April please come back!" He sobbed and cried out, heavy feeling in his chest as his body shook with sobs.

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He had time to calm down as he lay in bed, staring into space. Turning his head as he heard the door open only to see it was Tammy, body covered with cuts and still in that god awful leopard dress. "Hey handsome, how you feeling?"

Marcus was silent, how was he feeling? Pain? Heartbroken? Guilt? Feeling like a killer?

Tammy had made her way over and sat on the bed at his side "she dumped you?"

"Yeah" He said quietly, words barely coming out.

"Guess it's just me and you, how about once you get out we have some celebratory drinks to celebrate surviving and now being single" she suggested causing Marcus to sharply turn to look at her, eyes wide.

"You serious? Brad is dead! We almost died! April almost died because we were all drunk! Because Brad was drunk behind the wheel!" He said as his voice grew louder.

Tammy sighed "look things happen but we need to move on"

"Don't you care that he's dead?!"

"Like I said, it's sad but things happen we just need to move on--"

"-are you not listening?! This happened because of the drinks! Because we were too fucking drunk! Brad is dead!"

"Marcus--"

"No I'm done! I'm done!"

"You're not thinking straight"

"Oh I'm thinking straight...I'm thinking straight for the first time in my life!"

"You need me Marcus"

"Get out" He said, tone of voice low as he gave to order.

"No M--"

"GET OUT!" He yelled at the top of his lungs in anger, loud enough that probably most of the hospital would have turned to look in the direction of his room.

Tammy looked back at him, shaking her head before turning away

and leaving his room. Marcus let out a shakey breath as he lay back in his bed in a way feeling relief wash over him that someone who was being such a bad influence has now gone from his life by his choice.

An hour later a woman came into the room who seemed to be some sort of Doctor. "Hello Mister Hayes, how are you feeling?" She asked as she moved to sit on the chair next to his bed.

"Like crap" he scoffed.

"I had a friend of yours, April Wesley come and speak to us about your difficulties with alcohol" she explained, hearing April be called a friend hurt more than anything.

Marcus swallowed as he could feel tears prickling his eyes as they threatened to leave.

"I...I don't know how to stop" he whispered.

"Mister Hayes the treatment and guidance we offer will only benefit you if you want to stop-"

"-I do" he whimpered as the tears now fell down.

"I want to stop....I need help because I can't live like this, please! Please help me" He sobbed as the doctor looked at him.

"We can help, I've checked with the doctor and the earliest we can get you in for treatment and support is tomorrow" explained the doctor as Marcus nodded his head.

"T-thank you"

It was difficult years through his life, fighting this addiction he had, fighting the urge to take a drink when it grew tough. He learned to find other ways to distract himself when the urges came, in the end turning to music.

He would spend time writing lyrics down even if it was just random lines that came to mind and strumming a few notes on his guitar. It got to a point where he began performing these original songs to small venues and the next thing he knew he was signing onto a small record label and his name was getting out there.

When the radio host Molly Morgan discovered his music that's when it really set off and more people were listening to his music. It was a long recovery but now he had been sober for all these years but it didn't stop the nightmares and visions he suffered.

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“You’re not a killer Marcus”

“Yeah I am....I could have stopped it, she begged me to stop drinking and I didn’t listen and that meant I was too drunk to stop a drunk man getting behind the wheel of a car” Responded Marcus as Bella sighed.

“Still didn’t kill him, you feel guilt because you where there but you didn’t kill him” she said as Marcus bit his lip and looked down as his arms.

“I’m never going to be free am I?” said Marcus as he looked away from his arms and turned to Bella.

“First of all you’re only fifteen years sober, that’s a great achievement! In regards to the nightmares and visions maybe confronting this clown is the only way we can be free, in a way it had haunted us for twenty seven years without us realising, and I wish you told me the truth about what happened that night because I would have been there no matter what” she explained as Marcus let out a shaky breath.

“We need you Marcus, we’re a team remember? Bells and Mucus?” She said with a smirk as Marcus let out a sad chuckle.

“So what do you say? Are Bells and Mucus ready to kill a child eating clown?”

Marcus sat there as he thought about it. Maybe she was right, maybe this is the only way he’ll be free from the demons of his past, maybe this is the only way he can battle and confront his fears.

He turned to look at Bella as he took a deep breath in before breathing out “Okay let’s do this”

Author's Note:

Hi, it would honestly mean a lot if you could leave a comment letting me know what you think so far! I have honestly spent so much time and effort on this and the characters in this story so it would mean a lot if you could leave a comment.